BENGALI LITERATURE

IN THE

NINETEENTH CENTURY

1800-1825

Ach. 18.2.21.

HISTORY

OF

BENGALI LITERATURE

IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

1800-1825

Sushila-Kumara De.

BY

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PUBLISHED BY THE

UNIVERSITY OF CALCUTTA

1919

PRINTED BY ATULCHANDRA BHATTACHARYYA

AT THE CALCUTTA UNIVERSITY PRESS, SENATE HOUSE, CALCUTTA

Carpentier

PK1708
D44
1919
MAIN

TO

MY FATHER

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PREFACE

With the object of drawing the attention of scholars to the comparatively uncultivated field of Bengali Literature, I have in the present volume embodied the results of some of my researches into it. These investigations were first undertaken in 1912-1913, chiefly for the purpose of my essay for the Griffith Memorial Prize for Original Research for 1915 and were subsequently worked up into a thesis for Premchand Roychand Research Studentship, for which it was approved in 1918.

In selecting the nineteenth century for treatment out of all other periods, I am actuated by several considerations. In the first place, the nineteenth century possesses a peculiar interest for us. It is the period of British influence on Indian thought, and one which witnessed a new awakening and the growth and building up of modern Bengal and modern Bengali Literature. The importance of this period in all its aspects, political, social, religious, as well as literary, can never be exaggerated. It is to be regretted, however, that we possess no adequate and connected information about the period and the literature in which, indeed, the civilisation of modern Bengal can be traced and without which that civilisation cannot be fully understood. I have not heard of any scholar who has yet made the nineteenth century literature his special study and written any special account of it. The earliest attempts at writing a connected account of Bengali Literature—the Bengali discourse of Rajnarayan Basu and the little pamphlet of Ganga Charan Sarkar—were meant chiefly as popular lectures rather than any comprehensive and synthetic study

of the subject. Pundit Ramgati Nyayaratna's more considerable and painstaking work is far too sketchy and too orthodox to serve as a connected and critical account; and his treatment of the nineteenth century, with which the Pundit seems to possess but little sympathy, is meagre and hasty. Mahamahopadhyay Haraprasad Shastri's fruitful researches in the field of early Bengali Literature is well-known; but it is to be regretted that the learned scholar did not direct his investigation to comparatively modern periods except by way of contributing a suggestive survey of the nineteenth century literature in the old series of the *Bañgadarśan*. It is needless to mention other subsequent works like those of Padmanabha Ghosal, Mahendra Nath Bhattacharjee, Kailas Chandra Ghose, Romesh Chandra Dutt and others; for researches in the field or at least accumulation of materials have necessarily made great strides in the thirty or forty years which have elapsed since their publication. The most recent treatment of the subject is to be found in Babu Dinesh Chandra Sen's newly published *History of Bengali Literature*, but it must be admitted that the learned author's account of the nineteenth century, which is dealt with only partially and which possibly did not come within the scope of his lucid lectures, is tacked on as a sort of appendix to his more valuable work on the earlier periods and, based as it is chiefly on the doubtful authority of Rev. J. Long's *Catalogue*, it is in itself a hardly satisfactory study of the schools and leaders of this important era of Bengali Literature. It is remarkable indeed that recent investigations and researches in this field are directed more towards ancient Bengali Literature than towards its more modern phases. This apparent want of interest in a very noteworthy period must not, however, lead one to underrate its importance. It is true that the period of European writers in Bengali is not very acceptable

to a mere literary taster; but even in this seemingly dullest period of our literary history, there is much more than is ever dreamt of in the philosophy of the airy generaliser who hurries over it to pastures more agreeable. It is the silent but strenuous efforts of the hosts of forgotten or half-forgotten writers, both foreign and native, of this and later periods that have built up the whole fabric upon which the present-day literature is based : but it has always been the misfortune of the worthy pioneer authors to be kept in the background and looked upon as notable curiosities. It is time, however, when their records are fast vanishing and in a few years will be irretrievably lost, that we must hasten to estimate their work and worth, reconstruct their history, and give them their respective share of credit in the growth and progress of the national mind.

Being thus without a competent guide in the field but convinced of the importance of the work, I have been obliged to chalk out my own path. The purpose and scope of the present volume will be rendered plainer by a glance through the book itself than I could hope to make it here except by way of anticipating what will be found in the following chapters. I may briefly add, however, that my object has been to give, from a literary point of view, but with a background of social and political history, and from a direct reading of the literature itself, an account of the important period in which, indeed, the obscure origins of modern Bengali Literature is to be sought, making it as full and as conveniently arranged as I could provide. The volume must not be regarded, however, as a mere storehouse of facts, and although presented as an essay of literary and biographical criticism, it may also be taken as an historical review of the course of Bengali Literature from its decadence after Bhārat Chandras's death to its

rejuvenation under the British influence—if not a minute, at least a compact and logical survey of the authors and works that demand attention. It would be too late in the day surely to insist upon the historical method of study of literature: but it has never been systematically and consistently applied to the investigation of modern Bengali Literature.

I am indeed aware that "the historical estimate" has its perils and snares and more than often results in strange freaks and that the discoverer of some forgotten minor writer is often under the temptation to magnify the value of his discovery; yet in applying the historical method in literary criticism I am following what is widely accepted by all philosophical critics. It is indeed the best way to attain that "disinterested objectivity" in criticism which Matthew Arnold so highly applauds and to avoid that "provincial spirit" which he rightly condemns. It must not be supposed, however, that I have substituted bird's eye views and sweeping generalisations for positive knowledge. The chain of historical summary can never be forged without the links supplied by individual facts. Nor, on the other hand, should it be supposed that I have a peculiar theory of my own or any particular school to uphold. Not a single sketch has been discoloured nor the comprehension of the general drift distorted by my own ideas. On the other hand, each author has been judged on his own merits and in order to obtain a true historical perspective, I have treated literature not as an isolated phenomenon but have taken care always to keep in view the relation of the literature to the social and political history of the time, for literary thought and contemporary events, as I have pointed out elsewhere, are indeed the two inseparable aspects of history. The task of such a reconstruction is by no means easy and one can

never claim infallibility or finality in a matter like this. To make a proper estimate of modern literature is, indeed, one of the most difficult tasks of literary criticism. An old country and its old literature is a study ; but a new country and its new literature is a problem. It is hard to realise the past ; but it is harder to read the present. All that this work can lay claim to is that a systematic, though tentative, attempt is made to study a progressive literature during a most noteworthy period in all its remarkable phases reflecting the thought and culture of the specified country and age.

But the following pages form only the first volume of my projected history of the 19th century literature. It deals with a very small part of the subject and with a seemingly barren and uninteresting period between 1800 and 1825. This is concerned, in the main, with the well-meaning but scarcely literary activity of the European writers, chiefly missionaries, and their colleagues in the domain of Bengal prose as well as with the strong counter-current of native energy which found its vent in a body of indigenous poems and songs, standing, as they do, in direct contrast to the work of the Europeans. The Introductory Retrospect is a brief preliminary recapitulation of the facts and circumstances which led to the beginnings of the modern age and modern literature. It should be taken as an introduction not only to the present volume but also to the volumes which will follow. To many, minutely conversant with the history of this period, the account would seem to be inadequate ; while to others, interested directly in the literature itself, it would seem disproportionately long and dry. It is extremely difficult, indeed, to hit happily upon the golden mean between brevity and prolixity : yet the necessity of such a retrospect must be admitted. It was not within my province

to give more than a mere rapid sketch of the history of the period in all its varied aspects but only with reference to its bearings upon literature, although volumes may be and have been written on their difficult and vast subject. I have not hesitated to draw very considerably upon what has already been written on it and indeed I have drawn so considerably that it is not possible to acknowledge my indebtedness in all cases except by way of a general reference in the bibliography. The recognised historians of this period of Indian History, I may be permitted to add, have divergent methods and view-points. Auber is complacent, Mill querulous, Thornton vindictive, Ghulam Hosain exuberant, Macaulay sweeping and Romesh Dutt vehement ; but the steadily accumulating mass of materials, in the shape of reports, pamphlets, bluebooks, state-papers and other documents would give to a patient scholar enough material for a thorough, sober, and I must add, imperatively necessary reconstruction of this period. The account of the European writers, which follow this introductory sketch, is made as full and accurate as materials at my disposal would allow, for never has full justice been done to these worthy pioneers who have been allowed to pass silently into oblivion. The average reader knows no other names than those of Carey and Marshman but the interesting group of writers, great and small, who surrounded or preceded these great names and added their little mite to the cause, are also worthy of grateful remembrance. They are, therefore, presented here as reputable and fairly interesting persons and not as unpresentable progenitors always to be kept in the background. The early missionary movements in Bengal are studied for the first time from original sources with reference to their bearing on Bengali language and literature and some pains are taken to trace the rather obscure

and neglected history of the early Roman Catholic missions to Bengal and their connexion with Bengali. The account of the Kabiwalas and other indigenous writers could not be made as full and well-arranged as I had desired ; for the materials and means of study are extremely scanty and unsatisfactory. I am still engaged upon this investigation and am collecting materials for fuller treatment ; in the mean time what is presented here must be taken as merely tentative.

The large number of quotations from various works scattered throughout the volume, no doubt, swells it to an enormous length but I could not always control the length of these illustrative extracts : for each quotation, in order to be illustrative, must be presented as complete in itself. Scraps and fragments and stray passages are not always helpful. In the next place the comparative scarcity of the books from which such passages are taken will, it is hoped, be an ample apology for their length and frequency. When the history will come down to more recent times the quotations will naturally become fewer : for one may then depend on the reader's means of acquaintance with the literature of his time. In these quotations I have carefully preserved the spelling and punctuation, of the original texts with which in all cases I have minutely compared and verified them. It will be also noticed that I have refrained from giving any translation of these Bengali extracts for the simple reason that no translation could have adequately conveyed the spirit of the original, and that the real importance of these writers lie not so much in their matter as in their form and method of expression, which mere translation can never reproduce.

As to chronology and classification, it is better to make a preliminary remark. Controlling dates and names,

although necessary and useful if kept within bounds, are intended merely as artifices of classification, for a better understanding of the general drift. There can be no hard-and-fast limits as encompassing an epoch, and history must unfold itself without any preconceived notion of artificial dates and eras. It is for this reason that in the present volume, the activity of the European writers has been traced for a certain unity of treatment down to the fifties, although after 1825 their influence was on the wane, and other movements were becoming prominent. On the other hand, I have thought it simpler to defer an enquiry into the first glimmerings of the struggle between Anglicism and Orientalism and the history of English education in its bearing on Bengali literature as well as the account of the rise of the Reforming Young Bengal under the leadership of David Hare, Derozio and others to the beginning of a separate volume, instead of dealing with them piecemeal at the end of the present essay. Some of the works of Rājā Rām Mohan Rāy and his colleagues belong chronologically to this period, but from the standpoint of literary history, they embody a subsidiary movement which comes into relief a little later, and are, therefore, deliberately reserved for later treatment. Without therefore disturbing in the least the true historical perspective, I have never attempted to force an account of any movement, literary or otherwise, into strict chronological shackles, but I have sometimes boldly looked forward while at others paused for a profitable retrospect, always bearing in mind that the natural course of events seldom takes as smooth and orderly development as we may desire.

With regard to transliteration of Bengali words, I have generally followed, with the exceptions noted below, the international method agreed upon by Orientalists for Sanscrit. In some cases where the name of a place or a

person has got a standarised spelling (as in Chinsurah, Howrah, and Burdwan), I have thought it fit to retain it; but in all other cases, the transliteration is done in the mode indicated with the only exception of using *cha* for চ. The words are, however, always rendered, not phonetically, but according to the recognised spelling, although widest possible divergence exists between the historical spelling and the actual pronunciation of Bengali words. I have, therefore, always rendered য by *ya*, whether occuring singly or in compound letter, ণ by *ṇa* distinguishing them respectively, although they are not so distinguished in pronunciation, from জ (*ja*) and ন (*na*). Similarly the three consonants শ, ষ, and স are distinguished by different signs (*ś*, *ṣ* and *s*) although they not often thus discriminated in pronunciation. The same remark applies to compound letters: I have rendered, as in Sanscrit, ক্ষ by kṣa, জ্ঞ by *jña*, and so forth. Partly on account of this divergence between spelling and pronunciation, which makes it impossible to apply Sanscritic transliteration in *toto* to the case of the living vernacular, I have been forced to make one or two important exceptions. I have not distinguished between ব (*va*) and ব (*ba*), for this distinction is hardly recognised in Bengali, either in spelling or pronunciation; I have therefore used *ba* indiscriminately for them. The final অ (*a*) presents some difficulty, for very often it is passed over in pronunciation. We write নীলদর্পণ (Nīla-darpaṇa) but we read it as নীল্‌দর্পণ্‌ (Nīl-darpaṇ). In these cases, I have generally dropped the অ (*a*). This, on the whole, is not a very satisfactory method; but in the absence of a better one, I have tentatively followed it here, leaving the whole question, which is indeed one of great practical importance, to the consideration of expert scholars.

In the task of collecting materials for the present volume, I have met with considerable difficulties known

only to workers in the same field. Although not more than a century has elapsed, the publications passed in review have already become very scarce and have seldom been satisfactorily reprinted; and in search of them, I had to ransack many libraries, great and small, departmental, public, and private, in Calcutta and outside, to which I could get access. Much of these interesting publications of the early nineteenth century is unhappily lost; much, unless we hasten to the rescue, is fast vanishing; while much, again, is scattered all over the country finding its way ultimately among many heterogenous collections, public and private. No complete history can ever be hoped for, till all these old publications and files, more or less complete, of old news-papers have been disentombed. There is not a single news-paper office in Calcutta—and Calcutta is a fair example of the country in this matter—that possesses a complete file of its own issue : not a single library, public or private, which contains even the more important Bengali publications of the first half of the century. However interesting and useful stray extracts or stray passages from these papers or publications may be, it is utterly impossible to write the history of this or any other period of the country's progress, political, social, or literary, as fully as could be done if these and other things had been carefully preserved or collected together. But in view of the fact that even what is now extant may in the course of a few years be irretrievably lost, it is time that we must seriously think of constructing a general view of the period out of the materials which still remain to us.

The writer of this thesis, however, has been successful in having access to most of the important publications he has dealt with. For the privilege of reading and examining large number of books passed in review—only a trifling percentage of those mentioned was inaccessible to him

and it was necessary to examine many that proved to be unworthy of mention—I have to thank the authorities of many libraries in or near Calcutta. I had expected to find a good collection of Bengali publications preserved in the Serampore College Library, but besides a few relics of the venerable old Carey, various missionary tracts, a nice collection of books pertaining to the history of the missionary movements in India, and a few old files of the *Friend of India* and other Christian papers, I could discover nothing else of any interest. Through the kind interest of a friend, who was residing in England at the time when this book was in hand and who at my request transcribed books and details for him, I had access, though not to the extent I had desired, to the benefit of the collection in the Library of the British Museum and of the India Office, with regard to both of which I had also invaluable help from Blumhardt's descriptive Catalogues. But my chief indebtedness is to the Library of the Board of Examiners, late Fort William College, from which all the Bengali publications of that College had been procured for me by the authorities of the Imperial Library of Calcutta. My thanks are also due in this connexion to the late Mr. W. E. Madge, formerly Superintendent of the Reading Room in this Library and to Mr. Surendranath Kumar, his successor to the same office, for their interest in my work and for uniform courtesy and kindness shown to me during the time I studied there. I must also thank the authorities of the Baṅgīya Sāhitya Pariṣat for permitting me to make ample use of its fine collection of Bengali books and manuscripts. My special thanks in this respect are due to Babu Basantaranjan Ray, keeper of these manuscripts, for kindly giving me all facilities for using them and also for placing at my disposal his expert knowledge in this matter. He never

grudged to render me help whenever I required it and also very kindly undertook to compare and verify the quotations cited from these manuscripts in the Appendix to this volume. I should also take this opportunity of associating this insignificant work with the honoured name of the late lamented Principal Ramendrasundar Tribedi, who was, in more than a metaphorical sense, the life and soul of the Sāhitya Pariṣat. His recent and untimely death is mourned all over Bengal and there is no need for prolix panegyrics in the case of one who is so widely known by his life and work; but I cannot remain satisfied without giving voice to my sense of indebtedness and esteem for one to whom I am grateful in many ways and without expressing my personal regret that I could not show him these pages, in which he took so much interest, in print. To the ripe and varied scholarship of Mahamahopadhyay Haraprasad Shastri, I am deeply indebted in divers ways, for I was always allowed to draw liberally upon it; and his contagious enthusiasm for Bengali language and literature has been a source of unfailing inspiration to me.

Among other friends and scholars who kindly helped me in various ways, my thanks are specially due to my friend and colleague Professor Rameshchandra Mazumdar M.A., Ph.D. for steady encouragement, for valuable suggestions and for procuring me some rare books from the Library of the Bengal Asiatic Society. I may be allowed to note here that Dr. Mazumdar first drew my attention to the only extant copy in that Library of Manoel de Assumpçao's *Crepar Xastrer Orthbhed*, one of the earliest printed books written by a Portuguese missionary. To another friend and colleague, Professor Sunitikumar Chatterji M.A., I am indebted for help in various ways and specially for getting me a copy of Father Guerin's edition of the work referred to above from Father Wauters of Dharmatalla

Church, and I must thank Professor Narayanchandra Banerjee M.A. of the University for a copy of *Gupta-ratnoddhār* which I could not get here and which he procured for me very promptly from Benares. My friend, Babu Mohitlal Mazumdar, very kindly and carefully prepared an index to this volume, which, for shortness of time, could not be printed in this volume. I must also acknowledge obligations to the Staff of the Calcutta University Press for prompt assistance and unfailing courtesy in getting these pages in print in a remarkably short time. To them and to all others who have helped me by lending books, by giving facilities for research and in other ways, it is a pleasure to return my heartiest thanks.

I cannot conclude without availing myself here of the privilege of expressing my deep sense of obligation to Sir Asutosh Mukhopadhyaya who has been at the helm of this University for many years past and would be, let us hope, for many years to come. It is not necessary to dwell upon his undoubted titles to our gratitude, esteem and love, or upon the roll of his varied services, not yet closed, in the cause of University education in Bengal: for every one, connected with the University or standing outside, is well aware of his long and unstinted devotion to the interests of the country and of the high sense of duty which impels him to scorn delights and live laborious days, not for riches or honours, place or power nor even for such fame as grows on mortal soil. But I may be permitted to refer in this connexion to his brilliant and fruitful efforts which have at last obtained academic recognition for the neglected vernacular languages and literatures of India and to acknowledge the magnificent inducement, now made possible by him, for the scientific study of those languages and literatures. It is his inspiration which dispelled all my doubts about the necessity

of a work like this and it is his generous encouragement which has made possible its publication.

I am fully aware that this essay is not free from errors and defects. In a field where workers are few and encouragement, until quite recently, very little, one has to work under considerable difficulties and disadvantages and nothing would be more welcome than sympathy and co-operation. With the progress of investigation in the field, new facts are bound to come to light every day; and even of the facts that have already been known we can never pretend that he has taken them all into consideration. All suggestions for improvement and correction therefore would be thankfully received. There are a few obvious misprints and mistakes which, in spite of my best efforts, the necessity of quick publication could not avoid and for which I crave the indulgence of the generous reader. The exceedingly short time within which the book had to be rushed through the press did not allow me in all cases to verify the references given in the footnotes and in some cases the books, though easily procurable at the time of writing this essay, had now become difficult of access and for these I had to depend entirely upon the notes I had previously made. These shortcomings, however, let me trust, are not material. In conclusion I can only hope that the volume contains enough to justify its publication in the present form.

SENATE HOUSE :
Calcutta, July 17, 1919.

SUSHIL KUMAR DE.

CONTENTS

	PAGE.
Division of Subject	1
Introductory Retrospect, 1760-1800	7
Earliest European Writers	65
Carey and Śrīrāmpur Mission	94
Carey and Fort William College	117
Pundits and Munsis of Fort William College ...	159
Earliest Bengali Journalism	228
Later European Writers	245
General Characteristics	271
Interregnum in Poetry from 1760	296
Kabiwalas	302
Love-Lyrics and Devotional Songs	387
Miscellaneous Writers in the Old Style ...	426
Appendix I. Old Bengali Prose	455
Appendix II. Bengali Bible	487
Appendix III. Gilchrist's Oriental Fabulist ...	490
Appendix IV. Early Christian Periodicals ...	492
Appendix V. Early Christian Tracts ...	493
Bibliography...	494

BENGALI LITERATURE

IN THE

NINETEENTH CENTURY

CHAPTER I

Division of Subject.

The literature produced since the permanence of the British rule in Bengal, which is often conveniently described as "modern" literature, has a character of its own, at once brilliant, diverse, and complex. To label it in a phrase is not only difficult but often misleading: for never was there a literature more memorable for its rapid development and its copious and versatile gifts. It can to-day boast of many characteristics, and the central note is lost in the extreme diversity of forms and tendencies exhibited. It is full of vitality, versatility, and diligence: critical and cultured, intensely personal and self-regulated; apparently defiant of all laws, of standards, of conventions: yet a little reflection will show that in spite of this diversity of styles and motives, this epoch has a character which differentiates it from any other era of Bengali literature. Can we imagine *Kṛṣṇakānter Uil* being published in the age of Bidyāpati or *Nīl-darpaṇ* in that of Bhārat-chandra?

The literature why called "modern."

The character of modern Bengali literature essentially different in its form and motive from its pre-British fore-runner.

How different are the problems of life and character which Kabikaṅkaṇ paints from those we see reflected in the pages of Rabīndranāth! What a new world is that of Michael, Hem, or Nabīn beside that revealed to us by Bijay, Kṣemānanda, or Rām-prasād! What wholly different types, ideas, and aims! It may not be easy to indicate what these characteristic differences are, but there can be no doubt that our age, although presenting, as it does, instances of a dozen different styles, certainly possesses its own unmistakable *zeitgeist* in phraseology and substance which distinguishes it from all other ages. What these characteristic points of difference are we shall see clearly as we proceed in our study of the literature itself; but at the outset it must be admitted that modern Bengali literature, as such, has surely a claim for treatment peculiarly suited to itself.

Hence the necessity of a separate treatment in spite of historic continuity.

But it would be a difficult problem in social dynamics to fix any thing like an exact date for this change in the tone of the literature or to trace it back to its social causes. Broadly speaking, our literature began, no doubt, with the permanence of the British rule and the spread of western ideas; but these events cover almost a century from 1757 to 1857. The death of Bhārat-chandra in 1760, only three years after Plassey, in which we reach a political and social cause of the great change, is often taken as the typical date; but it might also be contended that the death of Īśvar Gupta in 1858 marks the end of the most effective note in the older current of literature and the beginning of the new era. Yet both these dates, it is obvious, are purely arbitrary points. For the modern tone in literature can hardly be detected in any

The starting point.

The dates usually and generally accepted are 1760 and 1858; but both seem arbitrary.

thing written after 1760 till almost half a century elapses; on the other hand, the growth of this new trend in literature may be detected some half a century earlier than 1858, and Īśvar Gupta himself is not wholly free from the new influence. If an approximate date is necessary, it is to be found somewhere in the first quarter of the 19th century: and the year 1800 is usually, and may be roughly, taken to be the starting point. But it must be borne in mind that such approximation of a date is intended, more or less, merely to facilitate classification. Some misguided critic has been induced to baptise this era of literature as the Victorian age. Such a nomenclature is not only mistaken but also misleading; for, as put by a well-known critic of the present day, "neither reigns nor years, nor centuries, nor any arbitrary measure of time in the gradual evolution of thought can be exactly applied, or have any formative influence. A period of so many years, having some well-known name by which it can be labelled, is a mere artifice of classification."[1] Subject to this caution, however, we may safely take 1800 to be the starting point in the new era of Bengali literature.

No exact date can be fixed; but 1800 A.D. may be taken as the approximate one.

But the historian of literature cannot, however, overlook the long dead-season for fifty years which preceded the year 1800; for although in this period we have scanty literature, yet work of another kind was being accomplished in these apparently barren years. From the battle of Plassey to the beginning of the 19th

Yet we are bound to take account of the most eventful period between 1760 and 1800; and the period, 1800-1858, though not rich in actual production, is yet its formative stage and its importance can not be ignored.

[1] Frederic Harrison, *Studies in Early Victorian Literature*, p. 2.

century, mighty revolutions were occuring not only in the political and the social but also in the literary history of Bengal. In an historical study of literature, the far-reaching significance of these years cannot surely be ignored. On the other hand, although the first half of the 19th century till 1858 is comparatively barren from a strictly literary point of view, yet this was the formative period of modern literature, and the early devoted labours of the various philanthropic Europeans and Indians, whose memory is still cherished by grateful Bengalis, had sown the seeds which, when the time came, broke into the rich and lovely after-growths of modern times.

Division into periods (i) Introductory Retrospect, 1760-1800.

We, therefore, propose, taking 1800 A.D. to be roughly the year of commencement, to discuss and decide, first of all, by way of introduction, the question of origins, with a preliminary recapitulation of the causes and circumstances, political, social, and literary which led to the beginning of modern literature. This will involve a cursory review of the period between 1757 (or 1760) and 1800 in its various aspects, and its bearing upon literature. From 1800, the year of the foundation of the Fort William College and the formation of the Śrīrāmpur Mission, to 1825, the year of the publication of the last volume of Carey's *Dictionary* and the laying of the foundation-stone of the Hindu College, we have a period of very great importance in our literature from an historical rather than a literary point of view: for we are concerned here with the early beginnings of our literature, with the labours of the Missionaries and the Civilians, and with the early efforts, public and private, for the spread of British education in Bengal. From 1825 to

(ii) Beginnings 1800-1825.

1858, the year of the death of Īśvar Gupta and the first appearance of Michael's dramas, followed within five years by the publication of *Tilottamā*, *Nīl-darpaṇ* and *Durgeś-nandinī*, we are in a transitional period of great ferment on every side, during which the country, awakened to new energies, was struggling to break fresh ground by assimilating the wealth of new ideas now brought before it. All the greatest strifes, social, religious, and literary were fought, though not completely won, during this period of awakened activity. The problem of English education now decisively settled, the triumph of the West was fully proclaimed ; and the literature as well as the society, in trying to adjust itself to this new order of things, began to take a distinctly new tone and colour. This was the era of the Reforming Young Bengal. The various, plentiful, but inferior literature produced during these years in which new experiments were tried, new veins of thought opened, a new public and a new order of writers created, prepared the way for the great flood-tide which began with 1858. From the latter date we have a third epoch of great fertility, brilliant achievement, and high promise, during which all the older ideas of life and literature were being revolutionised and transmuted into things better suited to the needs of the new era. The Literary Young Bengal came to take the lead.

(iii) Transition. 1825-1858.

(iv) Revolution. 1858-1894.

Our enquiry in the following pages will be chiefly confined to the tracing of the origins, to the well-meant but scarcely fruitful activity of pioneer authors who range over a seemingly dull and barren period at the commencement of our literary history. We need not lament, however, that at the beginning of our acquaintance, we do

not see our literature at its best, that we are not introduced at once to a Homer. We have, it is true, to plod wearily through a mass of indifferent writings whose charm, if any, seems to have long palled, before we come to a single good writer of importance; but it is well that we should do so. It enables us to examine the foundations more critically and get the parts of history into true proportion and connection. We are apt to pass lightly over the early beginnings of literary history as a stage that we have outgrown and lay greater stress upon periods more engaging: but no theory is more inaccurate or insufficient than that which despises the historic estimate and bids us look only to the 'best' or the 'principal' things. In an era of evolutionary philosophy, it would be idle to investigate any manifestation of the spirit of nature or of man apart from its origin and growth. We can not despise the barbarian for the civilised man, as Hume perhaps would have done; for to the student of modern sociology, the barbarian becomes important in his organic relation to the civilised man, and the whole "social series," to quote a phrase of Mill's, must be studied step by step through the various stages of development. No more can the historian of literature ignore the rude unshaped farrago of writings which always precedes the literature of a finer stuff; for the one can never be studied intelligently without the help of the other. The literature, therefore, which is represented, in poetry and in prose, by the great names of Michael and Bańkim, must be studied in the light of the no-literature that is represented by the lesser names of Carey and Mṛtyunjay. It is no waste of time to trace step by step the way in which we have laid the foundations of a national literature which, if not rich in present accomplishment, is radiant with the promise of the future.

Scope and method of the present enquiry.

CHAPTER II

Introductory Retrospect.

Circa. 1760-1800.

Taking 1800 A.D. to be roughly the date of commencement of the modern era of Bengali Literature, we find, however, that it is not until nearly half a century elapses that we come across any literature strictly deserving the name. In the meantime if we pause for a moment and look at the political history of the country and the general condition of the people, from 1760 to the beginning of the 19th century, we shall find that it was an age in which we can hardly expect any quiet development of literature under favourable political and social conditions. It will be profitable at the outset to study here, however briefly, the general history of the period in relation to its literature: for every history of literature must always have a back-ground of political and social history.

The necessity of a cursory retrospect of facts relating to the general condition of Bengal between 1760-1800.

The political history of Bengal in the latter half of the 18th century is essentially the history of the rise, growth, and gradual establishment of the British rule. The so-called battle of 1757 is usually and popularly regarded as marking a turning point in the history of Bengal: but it is well-known that this petty rout,[1] usually glorified with the association

Rise and growth of the English power.

[1] So designated by Lyall, *Rise of the British Dominion in India*, p. 107. See Hill, *Bengal in 1756-57*, I. cxii and cxiii; also III. 212; Firminger, *Introduction to the Fifth Report*, Vol I, p. i-iii, and references cited therein.

of undying military renown, was not directly productive of any fresh privilege to the English power; nor did it, in itself, affect the political destiny of the country. Clive himself did not perhaps know what he had won, although later on his tendency to exaggerate the value of his services led him to magnify his achievements; nor did the servants of the Company, at that time, attach much importance to this incident; still less were they aware of any definite act of conquest usually associated with this battle. "The general idea" writes Luke Scrafton, who had intimate knowledge of the English affairs in 1757, "at this time entertained by the servants of the Company was that the battle of Plassey did only restore us to the same situation we were in before the capture of Calcutta; the Subah was conceived to be as independent as ever, and the English returned into their commercial character."[1] No fresh commercial privileges were asked of Mīr Jā'far nor were any wanted by the Company who were content with the terms granted to them in 1716.[2] As yet there was hardly any important acquisition of territory by the Company who, more mindful of their commercial interests than anything else, chose to seek umbrage under the shadow of the Mohammedan power, itself declining. Even in 1765, Clive flattered himself that he had "revived the power of the Great Mughal,"[3] and for a long time after Plassey,

Position of the English in Bengal in the middle of the 18th century.

[1] Luke Scrafton, *Observations on Mr. Vansittart's Narrative*, p. 2.

[2] Vansittart, *A Narrative of the Transactions in Bengal*, vol. i, p. 24. The treaty with Mīr Ja'far is given in Aichison, *Collection of Treaties etc.* Vol. I, p. 186; also Verelst, *View of the Rise and Progress etc. of English Government of Bengal*, p. 143-44.

[3] Letter of the Governor and Select Committee to the Court, Sep. 30, 1765, quoted in Firminger, *op. cit*, p. viii.

whatever territory the Company held, it held not on terms of military conquest but as a grant from a superior Mohammedan power. There was, no doubt, a fiction involved in all these proceedings—a masquerade as Clive chose to describe it—yet the English at this time held ground in Bengal chiefly as trader and secondarily as revenue-collector under the Mogul Emperor. The term "British Empire in India" obtained currency from its first bold use in 1772 by Warren Hastings, who for the first time disclosed a deeper sense of the responsibilities of empire; but the possession of the sovereign rights by the Nawāb was still recognised, and the long debate,[1] vehemently carried on, in the Court and on the Council Board, on the question of sovereignty in Bengal, would go to show how little the English trading company at this time was conscious of any conquest of the country by its military power, and how greatly it was conscious of the instability of its own footing.

But though Plassey cannot be directly credited to have brought into being the British empire in Bengal, yet the great empire of the Mogul and its subahdār-ship in Bengal were gradually breaking down. The period between 1757 and 1765 witnessed also the down-fall of the French commercial settlements which left Bengal open to the English. In spite of these and other opportunities, it took nearly half a century, however, for the British rule to establish itself firmly in Bengal. One of the chief reasons for this was that, during these years, commercialism was the dominating factor in the policy of the Directors of the Company; and it was by slow degrees that they departed from their original commercial position. About

Commercialism as a dominating factor in the Company's policy.

[1] Firminger, *op. cit*, p. xiv-xxi; p. cclvi-cclvii.

the time of Clive's second mission, no doubt, a schism arose in the Court of Directors which heralded a fundamental change in the character of the Company. One party was for trade alone, the other supported Clive in his proposal to accept the Dewānī and thus incur the responsibility of government. In 1761, the Court wrote to its agents in India, declaring that trade was to be combined with "warfare, fortification, military prudence, and political government."[1] But this military precaution was urged chiefly for the protection of trade and, although the break-up of the Mohammedan rule was beginning to offer vast opportunities to the trader to become a soldier and a politician, the Court always insisted upon an attitude of non-intervention and peremptorily disapproved, on more than one occasion, the intention of its agents for territorial acquisition when such a step did not also extend their sales and profits.[2]

It was by slow degrees, therefore, that the company of calculating shop-keepers turned into earnest empire-builders. Gradually they began to acquire zemindary rights, monopolise revenue, assume civil control, and step by step exclude the Mohammedan Government by destroying its financial and military supremacy. This long process of gradually exhausting and appropriating the functions of the existing government, which, however, meant, as it did, half a century of misery to the people, first began with the grant of the districts of Burdwan, Midnapur, and Chittagong in 1760. The necessities of revenue administration compelled the Company to build up a system of internal government

Slow and gradual acquisition of power.

[1] Quoted in F. P. Robinson, *The Trade of the East India Company*, p. 67.

[2] Esp. Letter to Bengal, March 16, 1768, quoted in Auber, *Rise and Progress etc.* vol. ii, p. 185.

and consolidate its military power; but it was not till the grant of the Dewānī in 1765 that it began to obtain a complete control over finance, over the administration of civil justice, and over the entire military defence of the country. The accession to the Dewānī, which, however, was declined by the Directors on a former occasion, imposed upon the British traders the duties of administration. They began to exercise every prerogative of the sovereign save that of criminal justice.[1] But even then, though real masters of the country, they preferred to wear the mask of double government. By this device, to all the abuses of the ancient system of government were superadded all the evils of a new system of divided authority. The people grew uncertain as to where his obedience was due.[2] The Nawāb, though theoretically left in his full glory as subahdār, was, in the language of Clive, "a shadow" and "a name," and was deprived of every independent military and financial support of his executive. The Hon'ble Company, on the other hand, though actual sovereigns, pretended to be nothing more than mere passive receivers of profits and revenues, and the shadow of the Nawāb was a convenient covering for all their acts of exaction and oppression. The country was placed under extensive misrule. The individual British adventurer, in the service of the Company, brought up, since the days of Clive, in the tradition of aggression, dethronement, spoliation, and extortion, considered high-handed proceedings as his time-honoured privilege, grown out of the anomalous way in which the British power came into being. These

Accession to the Dewānī.

State of Bengal under the Double Government.

[1] Field, *Regulations of the Bengal Code*, Introd., p. 4.
[2] Verelst, *op. cit.* App. p. 122.

servants of the Company, abroad with a nominal salary, were coming home laden with such colossal fortune, often acquired with no clean hand, that the 'Indian Nabob' became a scandalously proverbial term. Every vice which is the offspring of unlimited authority and insatiable avarice, flourished unchecked. The papers relating to the conduct of the Company's servants and their underlings on the whole question of internal trade, of receiving presents, and other corrupt and pernicious practices, remain as an indelible blot in the early records of the Company's history.[1]

The conduct of the Company's servants.

It is not easy to imagine today what suffering this meant to the country. The anarchical state in which the provinces were placed not only contributed powerfully to its impoverishment but it absolutely dissolved the government of the country so far as the protection of the people was concerned. The truculent Mohammedan or the Mahratta was, in his day, a tyrant from fitful caprice, from lax police and unchecked violence. But the cold calculating Anglo-Indian was a tyrant from prescience, and his tyranny, with his superior shrewdness and power of organisation, was a system in itself, which extending, as it did, to every village market and every manufacturer's loom, touched the trades, the occupations, and the lives of the people very closely.[2] His commercial cupidity, under

What it meant to the country.

[1] See, for instance, Director's Letter, dated Feb. 8, 1764 (quoted in the *Second Report of the Select Committee*, 1772); Clive's Letter to the Directors, dated Sep. 30, 1765 (*Third Rep.* 1773, App. pp. 391-98, Mīr Kāsim's Letter, dated March 26, 1762; also *ibid*, dated May, 1762; Hastings' Letters to the Governor, dated May 13 and 26, 1762; *ibid*, dated April 25, 1762; Vansittart, *op. cit.* ii. pp. 80-81, iii. 74, iii. 381; Verelst, *op. cit.* p. 8 and p. 46 et seq; Account of Gray, Resident at Maldah, quoted in Verelst, p. 49; Bolt, *Considerations* etc., p. 191-194; Mill, *History*, Bk iv. pp. 327-338, also p. 392 et seq; *Seir Mutaqherin* iii. sec. xiv. esp. p. 201 et seq.

[2] Vansittart's Letter to the Proprietors of India Stock, 1767, pp. 88, 89, 93, quoted in Mill, *op. cit.* iii. p. 431 footnote.

a system of monopoly and coercion, deprived the country of those sources of wealth, of "those rights of free production and free barter which they had enjoyed under good and bad government alike."[1] The consequences were too evidently exemplified in the ruin of the entire inland trade and manufacture, in the decline of agriculture under oppressive systems of land-settlements, in the diminution of the specie, and in the general distress of the poor. The reputation of the English was so bad in Bengal that no sooner did a European come into one of the villages "than all the shops were immediately locked up and all the people for their own safety ran away."[2] "The sources of tyranny and oppression" said Clive in his memorable letter to the Directors, "which have been opened by the European agents acting under the authority of the Company's servants and the numberless black agents and sub-agents, acting also under them, will, I fear, be a lasting reproach to the English name in this country."[3] In 1772, the Select Committee express themselves bound "to lay open to the view of the Directors a series of transactions too notoriously known to be suppressed, and too affecting to their interest, to the character and to the existence of the Company in Bengal, to escape unnoticed and uncensured; transactions which seem to demonstrate that every spring of their government was smeared with corruption: that principles of rapacity and oppression universally prevailed, and that every spark of sentiment and public spirit was lost and extinguished in the unbounded lust of unmerited wealth."[4] Even

[1] R. C. Dutt, *Economic History*, p. 27 and pp. 30-31.

[2] *Memoirs of a Gentleman who resided for several years in the East Indies*, quoted in Robinson, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

[3] Clive's Letter to the Directors, dated Sep. 30th, 1765 (*Third Report*, App. p. 391 et. seq.)

[4] *Third Report*, 1772, App. No. 86.

Hastings[1] declared as early as 1762 that "the country people are habituated to entertain the most unfavourable notion of our government" and Verelst [2] asked in 1772 "How could we make the sordid interests of the trader consistent with that unbiased integrity which must reconcile the natives to a new dominion?" Nothing would be a more apt and incising description of the miserable state of the country than the celebrated simile of the author of the *Seir Mutaqherin*[3] in which he compares it to the predicament of an untenanted house infested by robbers but having no master to protect it.

The Anglo-Indian society, itself degraded, made light of such unrighteous proceedings: and the private morals of the Company's servants were no better than their public conduct. Hastings and Sir Philip Francis lived in open adultery; and extravagant rumours were afloat with respect to the latter's card-winnings. The morals of the majority of the Company's servants are truthfully, if grossly, portrayed in the weekly Hicky's *Gazette* [4], published a hundred years ago; and it is well-known that this notorious paper, itself conducted by one of "the most objectionable rowdy that ever landed in Calcutta," was ruined by incurring Hastings' displeasure for making public the strictly private arrangement by which the wife of the German adverturer and portrait-painter had become the wife of the great Governor-General. Sunday was not only given up to horse-racing, card-gambling, and

The private morals of the Company's servants no better than their public conduct.

[1] Hasting's Letter, dated Ap. 25, 1762 quoted in R. C. Dutt, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

[2] Verelst, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

[3] *Seir Mutaqherin*, iii. 185.

[4] Busteed, *Echoes from Old Calcutta*, 1888, gives many specimens; see p 171 et. seq. (ch. vii.); see also pp.109-170 on the social life of the Anglo-Indians.

masquerades: but "Sunday afternoons" we are told "as well as the early morning before the sun was too high in the heavens, were frequently taken advantage of to get rid of the accumulated evil passions roused between gentlemen, who might be seen, commonly enough, furnished with swords and pistols, wending their way in palanquins towards Tolly's Nullah, as it enters the Hooghly, to settle their little differences after the manner of Hastings and Francis; and they not unfrequently returned with a pistol-bullet or a sword-thrust as a memento of their outing and a remembrance of the region of Kidderpore."[1]

The administrative policy of the Company's government.

It cannot be denied, however, that the Company's Directors were trying their best to put down this state of things and were consistently condemning in unequivocal terms the conduct and character of their servants; yet the policy of the Company's government itself was a faithful reflection of its narrow commercial views. In order to enhance the value of his services, Clive had propagated the pernicious belief that India overflowed with riches, and the servants of the Company kept up this tradition by furnishing perpetually flattering accounts of their affairs in India.[2] Notwithstanding a knowledge of the pecuniary embarrassments of the Company, the inadequacy of the revenues, and the exhaustion of the treasury, the Directors were compelled, by the glorious promises so confidently made of unbounded

[1] In 1793, was published a book entitled "Thoughts on Duelling" by a "writer in the Hon'ble Company's Service" with a view to ascertain its origin and effect on society. (Seton-Karr, *Selection from Calcutta Gazette* ii, 564). See also *Good Old Days of Hon'ble John Company*, ch. xxiii and xxx. On the profanation of Sunday, see the Letter of the Directors (1798) and the proclamation of the G.-G. Nov. 9, 1798, quoted *op. cit.* ii, p. 36-37.

[2] Mill, *op. cit.* iii. 432. Mill records that "the inflated conceptions of the nation at large multiplied the purchasers of India stock: and it rose as high as 263 per cent."

treasures from India, to take to the desperate course of declaring from time to time impossible dividends, which had to be kept up by corrupt means and severe exactions but which involved the affairs of the Company in further financial difficulties. This had the effect of subordinating the Court of Proprietors more and more to the influence of the stock-brokers. The extraordinary disclosure of misgovernment, the difficiency of the Company's funds, its actual state of indebtedness, and the violent allegations of corrupt conduct which the Directors and their agents mutually threw upon one another raised some ferment in England and ultimately led to legislative interference. From 1774, the affairs of the Company frequently received the attentions of the Parliament, and the efforts of Sir Philip Francis succeeded in carrying the judgment of the Company's internal administration from the Court of the Directors to the bar of public opinion in England. But this intervention of the Parliament was due more to partisan animosity than to "any statesman-like desire to provide India with a better form of government." From Cornwallis's time, however, the administration of India was placed not, as hitherto had been done, in the hands of one of the Company's servants on the ground of local experience but in those of an English nobleman of elevated rank, unfettered by all local ties: yet it must be admitted that there was hardly existing any definite rule of administration except that which descended to it from its commercial institutions, nor any rule of policy but that which the accident of the day supplied.[1] The administration yet remained to be organised and the political power to be consolidated. Verelst,[2] at the end of 1769, had already called attention to the feebleness and

[1] Marshman, *History of India*, vol, ii p. 4.

[2] Verelst, *op. cit.* App. p. 124.

want of system in the government at Fort William: and the case of Hastings *versus* Francis, revealed by the state-papers, is a memorable testimony to the weakness of the central government, so strongly denounced by the author of the *Seir Mutaqherin*.[1] The beginning of the nineteenth century saw a disappearance of some of these evils, no doubt, yet in other respects, it witnessed no material improvement. The inevitable conviction, referred to by Francis as a state of "delirium", which took hold of almost every English official in those days was that the Dewānī lands were an inexhaustible estate for the profits of the Company: and that every conceivable method should be brought to bear upon the object of making India pay; this was declared in the official language as "keeping up the revenue". Efficiency of government was judged by the standard of net gain, "by the coarse and ready method of calculating, in pies and gundas, the increase and decrease of the revenue."[2] If we study the schemes of reform, formulated from time to time, we find that they were framed not so much in the interest of the people as in the interest of the commercial rulers of Bengal, to which everything else was sacrificed.

Its opposition to light and freedom

Indeed the Hon'ble Company, at home and in India, had reached that depth of opposition to light and freedom which justifies even Burke's extremest passages. Ignorance was the talisman on which their power over the people and the safety of their possessions in India were supposed to depend; and to dispel this popular ignorance by diffusing knowledge and education, by introducing missionaries and schoolmasters, by permitting freedom of public criticism was fantastically considered

[1] *Seir Mutaqherin*, vol. iii, p. 185 et seq.

[2] Firminger, *op. cit.* p. cexv.

to be "the most absurd and suicidal measure that could be devised." It was not until Wellesley's time that it was thought "god-like bounty to bestow expansion of intellect".[1] But even then no healthy public criticism was allowed or suffered upon the act of the government, although it must be admitted that the Press, which dates its birth in India since 1780, had hardly yet risen from the low level of a vile, scurrilous, and abusive print. The Śrīrāmpur Missionaries could not land or settle anywhere in Bengal except under the protection of the Danish flag, and when they had set up there a printing press or planned the first vernacular newspaper, they were afraid of government interference, and had to obtain special permission from Lord Wellesley. Even later, the cases of William Duane of the *Indian World* and of the notorious James Silk Buckingham of the *Calcutta Journal*, who were both arrested and deported to England in the most high-handed manner, would be enough to indicate the impatient and uncompromising attitude of the government towards fearless independence and plain-speaking. From time to time, however, attempts were made to liberalise the Company's rule ; but each measure taken was too slow and too late to save it from the nemesis of 1857 and the extinction in 1858.

Effect of these political changes on the social and economic condition of Bengal.

The effect of these political changes and of this administrative policy on the social and economic condition of Bengal was very deep and far-reaching. Thirty years had passed in vacillation between the Company as the Dewān and the Nawāb as the Nāzim during which, as we have seen, the country suffered from endless disorders and

[1] Wellesley, Address to the Students of the Fort William College, (in Roebuck's *Annals of Fort William College*, p. 493).

abuses of political government. Grasping and mercenary spirit made the so-called guardians of the people inaccessible to the plainest dictates of reason, justice, and policy and infused in them a total contempt for public welfare. The evils of an alien rule were aggravated by a deep ignorance of the manners and customs of the people and by a singular want of identification with their interests,—two articles which, as Ghulām Husain rightly comments,[1] are the principles of all union and attachment, of all regulation and settlement between the governors and the governed.

Effects of an alien rule.

During these years, the Mohammedan government itself was coming to an inglorious end. The situation of Mīr Jā'far was deplorable from the first. Old, indolent, voluptuous, endowed with many incurable vices, he made a very poor figure-head; and with an exhausted treasury, on the one hand, and vast engagements to discharge, on the other, he was driven to severest exactions. While his cruelties made him detestable, negligence, disorder, and weakness of his government exposed him to contempt. Mīr Kāsim was a more capable monarch, and Vansittart[2] pays a well-deserved tribute to his administration. Careful as he was of giving offence to the English, he could not help coming into conflict with them; for, as Vansittart says, "scarce a day passed but occasion was taken from the most trifling pretences to trample on his Government, to seize his officers and to insult them with threats and invectives." The executive power and control over criminal justice were still left in the hands of the Nawāb, whose sovereign

Dissolution of the Mohammedan government; its effect.

[1] *Seir Mutaqherin*, iii. 161.

[2] Vansittart, *op. cit.* iii. 381.

authority was acknowledged; yet the Mohammedan government, under the dual system, had too much reason to complain of their want of influence in the country which was "torn to pieces by a set of rascals, who in Calcutta walked in rags, but when they were sent out on gomastah-ships, lorded it over the country, imprisoning the ryots and merchants, and writing and talking in the most insolent and domineering manner to the fouzdars and officers."[1] And this was not confined to a particular spot. "It would amaze you," writes Mr. Senior, Chief at Kasimbazar, "the number of complaints that daily come before me of the extravagancies committed by our agents and gomastahs all over the country."[2] Although the Company had now become actually possessed of more than one half of the Nawāb's revenue, yet the latter was continually harrassed by oppressive exactions and became "no more than a banker for the Company's servants who could draw upon him [meaning presents] as often and to as great an amount as they pleased."[3] Naturally the Nawāb had to fall back upon the old method of raising from the zemindars what he had himself to render to his new masters; and the tradition of the royal oppression of zemindars, handed down from the days of Murshid Kulī Khān, of which vivid pictures will be found in the pages of the *Riazoo-s-Salatin* or the *Seir Mutaqherin*, was revived in the last days of the Mohammedan government in Bengal. The situation is vividly, if too sweepingly, narrated

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[1] Letter of Mr. Gray, President at Maldah, dated January, 1764, quoted in Verelst, *op. cit.* iii p. 49; see also the Nawāb's Letter, quoted in Vansittart, *op. cit.* iii. 381.

[2] Letter of Mr. Senior, Chief at Kasimbazar, quoted in Verelst, *op. cit.* p. 49.

[3] Clive's speech, dated March 30, 1772, in Almon's *Debates*, X. 14; see also Mill, *op. cit.* iii 354 et seq. In 1767, Lord Clive's own income was calculated to be at least £96,000.

thus by Verelst: "The violence of Meer Cassim in accumulating treasure and the relaxation of Government in the hands of Meer Jaffier equally contributed to confound all order, and by removing every idea of right, sanctified in some sort the depredations of the hungry collectors. The feeble restraint of fear produced little effect: while the increasing necessities of a master afforded at least a pretence of an uncontrolled exercise of power throughout every department. Inferior officers employed in the collections were permitted to establish a thousand modes of taxation. Fines were levied at pleasure without regard to justice: and while each felt in his turn the iron rod of oppression, he redoubled these extortions on all beneath him. The war in which Meer Jaffier was engaged against foreign enemies, the struggles of Meer Cassim, which ended with his distruction, and the usurpations of foreign traders completed the scene of universal confusion."[1]

Condition of the zemindar.

Thus the zemindars, unable to make any headway against the exorbitant demand and oppression of the Nawāb, on the one hand, and of the Company's official Nawābs, on the other, were gradually sinking out of sight lost in obscurity. Those who survived came out of the struggle, impoverished and degraded. These hereditary landlords had held the soil from very ancient times with quasi-feudal powers and virtually ruled the people within their own estates. Inspite of the severe strictures of Ghulām Husain[2] that the zemindars are, at all times and in all ages, a race incorrigible, it can be easily shown that the ancient zemindars as a class did much for the good of the country. They maintained order, settled disputes, administered justice, and punished crimes; they encouraged

[1] Verelst, *op. cit.* p. 66.

[2] *Seir Mutaqherin* iii. p. 204 *et seq.*

religion and rewarded piety; they fostered arts and learning and were patrons of literature. But the iron hand of the new system brought ruin upon this hereditary aristocracy. The total change, in the management of the revenue, had brought in an innovation by which property, along with its administration, not only changed hands but was placed on a new foundation, and thus deeply affected the condition, individually as well as collectively, of the people of Bengal. The system, introduced in the ceded districts, ignored the customary rights of the zemindars and sold their estates by public auction for increasing the revenue. The result was most lamentable. The lands were let out for a short term of three years to the highest bidder at the auction-sale. "Men without fortune or character" we are told "became bidders at the sale: and while some of the former farmers, unwilling to relinquish their habitations, exceeded perhaps the real value in their offers, those who had nothing to lose advanced yet further, wishing at all events to obtain an immediate possession. Thus numberless harpies were let loose to plunder whom the spoil of a miserable people enabled to complete the first year's payment. The renters under so precarious a tenure could not venture to encourage inferior farmers by advancing money, which is seldom repaid within three years; and without the advance, even the implements of husbandry were wanting to cultivate the lands."[1] Even the appointment of supravisors in 1769 in the appropriate districts, and the two councils, one at Murshidabad and the other at Patna, did not work any improvement. The Committee of the House of Commons could not help remarking—"Seven years had elapsed from the acquisition of the

Effects of the new system of land-settlements.

[1] Verelst, *op. cit.* pp. 70-71.

Dewani, without the government deeming itself competent to remedy the defects."[1] The reports of the supravisors themselves, consisting mostly of antiquarian or statistical essays, represent the government as having attained the last stage of oppressiveness and barbarism.

Condition of the ryot and the cultivator.

It is needless to comment on the condition of the ryot and the cultivator under this system. In a country subject to disorder and revolution, infinite varieties prevailed, as Hunter points out, in the administration of the separate districts. Some districts were under the immediate jurisdiction of the subahdār; while in others the hereditary zemindar preserved the appearance of power, although the jealousy of the subahdār and an increased taxation left to him little more than a nominal authority. The country laboured under the disorders of unbounded despotism. To add to this, a great national disaster occurred in the terrible famine of 1769-70 which cut off ten to twelve millions of human beings. Even before 1769, high prices had given indication of an approaching famine but the tax was collected as rigorously as ever.[2]

The Great Famine of 1769-70.

The suffering of the people was heightened so much by the acts of the Company's agents and sub-agents that the Court of Directors indignantly condemned their method of "profitting by universal distress."[3] Hastings, writing

[1] *Fifth Report*, p. 4. et seq. Also see *Sixth Report* of 1782, App. i; Colebrooke's *Supplement to the Digest of Bengal Regulations*, pp. 174-190.

[2] Hunter, *Annals of Rural Bengal*, p. 20-21; also pp. 399-404.

[3] Firminger, *op. cit.* p. cxcix: See also Letter to Bengal dated August, 28, 1771, quoted in Auber, *op. cit* pp. 354-5. It is difficult to say how far the famine was due to an intentional "cornering" of the grain or similar unscrupulous commercial transactions; but this was the widely prevalent complaint, and Stavorinus (vol I. p. 853) ascribes the famine partly to the "monopoly which the English had made of the rice."

in 1772, sets down the loss of population "at least of one-third of the inhabitants of the province"; and even twenty years later, Cornwallis officially described one-third of Bengal left as a jungle, inhabited only by wild beasts. The English knew very little about the country at that time and did less for its inhabitants. Even state-charity was grudged and land-tax was as rigorous as ever. Hastings points out in 1772 that "notwithstanding the loss of at least one-third of the inhabitants of the province, and the consequent decrease of the cultivation, the nett collections of the year 1771 exceeded even those of 1768." In 1771, one-third of the culturable land was returned in the public accounts as "deserted": in 1776, the entries in this column exceeded to one-half of the whole district, four acres lying waste to every seven. But the Company increased its demands from less than £100,000 sterling in 1772 to close on £112,000 in 1776.[1] One-third of the generation of peasants had been swept away and a whole generation of once rich families had been reduced to indigence. The revenue-farmers who had been unable to realise the tax were stripped of their office, shorn of their lands, and thrown ultimately into prison. The zemindars who had hitherto lived like semi-independent chiefs, fared worse[2]: and Sir William Hunter rightly remarks that "from the year 1770, the ruin of the two-thirds of the old aristocracy of Lower Bengal dates."

Its effects on the landlord and the tenant.

The great Famine also deeply affected the relation of the tenant to the landlord and of the landlords to one another. Nearly one-third of Bengal fell out of tillage:

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[1] Hunter, *op. cit.* p. 63-64.

[2] Hunter (*op. cit.* p. 56 ff.) cites the well-known cases of the Maharaja of Burdwan, the Raja of Nadia, and Rani Banwari of Rajshahi.

and the scarcity of the cultivators, at a time when there was more land than men to till it, gave the ryot the advantage over the zemindar, who was now compelled to court the peasant and make him tempting offers. This not only led to the growth of the two classes of resident and non-resident ryots and to a constant friction between them but it also added to the general misery by fostering violent feuds and quarrels among landed proprietors who had eagerly begun to bid against one another for the husbandman. These armed feuds between the landlords very greatly disturbed the repose of the districts[1] and it is no wonder that the zemindars are described in contemporary records as "continual disturbers of the peace of the province".

Prevalence of robbery and dacoity.

From the time of this Famine also, robbery and dacoity became disastrously prevalent. Large tracts of land around every village grew into thick jungles which fostered not only wild beasts but gave umbrage to terrible gangs of robbers. Besides the numerous and prosperous classes like the *thugs*, who practised robbery as a hereditary calling, and the bands of cashiered soldiers who turned vagrants, there were thousands of people who were driven by destitution to the desperate course of plundering, and from 1771 the suppression of these lawless sects, who sometimes roved about the country in armies many thousands strong,[2] was a matter of serious consideration to the Council. Organised outrages took place within an ear-shot from the seat of government. Long records how

[1] Hunter, *op. cit.*, pp. 60-61, p. 85.

[2] See a graphic account of the effects of dacoity in the Regulation of 1772 (35th Reg.), quoted in Colebrooke's *Supplement to the Digest* p. 1-13. Also see Hunter, *op. cit.* pp. 69 et. seq.

in 1780 a very terrible case of robbery, accompanied by incendiarism and violence, occurred in Calcutta in which about 15,000 houses were burnt down and nearly 200 people were killed.[1] Dacoity and robbery, with all its incidental terrors, prevailed in Bengal for more than three quarters of a century,[2] and left the life and property of the people absolutely insecure.

Insecurity of life and property.

The ancient police system, whether it consisted of the system of the village watchman, or of the *nugdees*, or of the *thānādārs*, as we find in the Bengal of 1760, was in a disorganised state when the English came into power, and was quite insufficient for the preservation of the peace or for the apprehension of thieves and gang-robbers. There was collusion with the criminals not only on the part of the petty zemindars, as the early administrators of Bengal tell us, but also on the part of these regularly constituted keepers of the public peace.[3] To meet the disorders of the country, the Faujdārī system was established in 1774: but it is well-known

The Police system.

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[1] Long, *Calcutta in Olden Time*, p. 37. See also Busteed, *op. cit.* p. 157; *Good Old Days*, ch. xviii; Seton-Karr, *op. cit.* ii. 213-14, 233; Forrest, *Selections from State Papers*; *Warren Hastings*, ii. 289.

[2] Kaye (*Administration of the East India Company*, III. ii and iii) gives an account of Thuggee and Dacoity in later years. Even as late as 1810, we find Lord Minto (Minute, dated Nov. 24, 1810) writing, "A monstrous and disorganised state of society existed under the eye of the supreme British authorities and almost at the very seat of the Government..... The people are perishing almost in our sight: every week's delay is a doom of slaughter and torture against the defenceless inhabitants of very populous countries."

[3] The greater zemindars had always a large number of troops at their disposal and sometimes the village watchman was enrolled on the establishment of the zemindars. They were employed not only in their original capacity but also in the collection of the revenue. Extensive duties similarly were expected from the Faujdār.

how vigorously the system was criticised by the opposition members of the Council and condemned as oppressive by the author of the *Seir Mutaqherin*.[1] It was candidly admitted by the Resolution of April 6, 1786, that the establishment of faujdārs and thānadārs "has by experience been found not to produce the good effects intended by the institution". On the old division of authority between the Nāzim and the Dewān, the executive power including criminal administration was allotted to the Nāzim while the Dewān possessed the civil jurisdiction. The establis ment of two courts of justice, the Dewānī and the Faujdārī 'Ādālat, which were controlled by the superior Sadar Dewānī and Nizāmat 'Ādālats at the Presidency of Fort William, was made by the Regulations of the Committee of Circuit[2] chiefly on the basis on this old distinction. One of the effects of the Regulations referred to was to transfer the Courts of Appeal from Murshidabad to Calcutta and to give the Collector the right to preside over local civil courts and keep vigilance over the local criminal courts; yet the criminal jurisdiction of the Nawāb was not taken away nor were miscarriages of justice and long-felt abuses removed by these Regulations. The establishment, for the Mayor's Court, of the Supreme Court in Calcutta, to which Francis was so stoutly opposed, brought, again, in its train a number of notorious evils, and one need hardly recall Macaulay's account of the high-handed proceedings of this Court. It was not until 1790 that the superintendence of criminal justice throughout the province was accepted by the English,[3] and judicial administration was not placed

The system of criminal and civil justice.

[1] *Seir Mutaqherin*, iii. p. 176-179. See *Fifth Report*, pp. 43 et seq.

[2] Colebrooke, *op. cit.* 1-14; also quoted and discussed in Firminger, *op. cit.* pp. cexxi et seq

[3] Cornwallis's Minute, December 3, 1790; also Regulation V and IX of 1793. Also *Fifth Report*, pp. 29-42: Seton-Karr, *Cornwallis*, pp. 88-94.

upon a sound footing until many years elapsed. Even in 1793, the preamble to the several Regulations of that year show that there must have been much confusion, abuse of justice, delay in procedure, and uncertainty of jurisdiction in civil and criminal courts.

Reforms of 1793.

The reforms of Cornwallis were not only in the right direction in these respects but they also struck a note of sympathy with the poor suffering ryot. But the ruin of the zemindars, begun by Mīr Kāsim and hastened by the *ijārā* settlement, was finally completed by the celebrated measure of 1793, which, though it did credit to the benevolent intentions of Cornwallis proved at least for the time being disastrous to many an ancient aristocratic family of Bengal. It would be out of place to discuss here this measure in all its bearings,[1] but it must be admitted that it was not only insufficient in affording protection to the ryot against the rack-renting power of the zemindar but it also became the means of *unsettling* many old zemindaries. It created a class of landlords destitute for the most part of public spirit and higher culture. The principle of the permanence of assessment, co-operating with splendid fertility of the Ganges valley, afforded, no doubt, a happy prospect of peaceful multiplication of the people and spread of civilisation, yet the wealthy ancient aristocracy, which for a long time constituted the main support of society and the great patron of arts and literature, was slowly breaking down under the stringent rules which put up their large estates to public auction at the mercy of the highest bidder. The class of up-start zemindars who stepped into their

[1] See on this question, Field, *op. cit*; Harrington's *Analysis ;* Seton-Karr, *Cornwallis*, ch. ii; *Fifth Report*, p. 12 *et. seq ;* Mill, *op. cit.* bk. vi ch: 5-6 ; R. C. Dutt, *op. cit.* ch. v, etc.

place could not be expected to possess the same inherited tradition of culture and refinement as marked the ancient aristocracy of the land. Side by side with these, there was created another class of landlords by the very measure itself; for under the new law, the mere collector of the revenue was, in many cases, invested with every proprietory right in the land.

Before passing from this cursory account of the dissolution of the Mohammedan government and the ruin of the zemindars, it would not be out of place to refer to the depraved moral influence of the Mohammedan court upon the courts of the noblemen and also upon the society in general. The vivid pages of the *Seir Mutaqherin* has already made familiar to us the depth of luxury, debauchery, and moral depravity of the period, and Ghulām Husain in one place offers a few bitter remarks on the ethicality of Murshidabad.[1] "It must be observed" he says "that in those days Moorshoodabad wore very much the appearance of one of Loth's towns; and it is still pretty much the same to-day. .....Nay, the wealthy and powerful, having set apart sums of money for these sorts of amours, used to show the way and to entrap and seduce the unwary, the poor, and the feeble; and as the proverb says—*so is the king, so becomes his people*,—these amours got into fashion." It is no wonder, therefore, that this atmosphere of luxury and moral degeneration did not fail to vitiate the general moral tone of society, especially of the upper classes. Public opinion was so low that very many forms of shameless vice, often accompanied by cruelty and violence, attracted little condemnation and received less punishment. It reminds one of the days of Charles II and his courtiers. It

Moral depravity of the period.

[1] *Seir Mutaqherin*, iii. p. 85.

is needless to recapitulate details : but it may be noted that hardly any of the worthies of this period, whether Hindu or Musalman, could ever show, both in their public and private life, a perfectly clean record. One can easily understand from this the degenerate tone in the writings of the period, which sprang up chiefly round the courts of these rajas or zemindars who were the dispensers of the daily bread of the poets. Even the work of the devout Rām-prasād or of the illiterate Kabiwalas was not entirely free from this almost universal taint.

Next to the zemindars, came the class of learned Brāhmaṇs, the other important factor of the social fabric, who suffered no less from these political and social changes. Even in this period of anarchy and oppression, the priestly class, however fallen or cried down in modern times, was recognised as the head of society, as the spiritual guide and enlightener of the race. Whatever damaging influence their much-too-decried exclusiveness might have produced, it cannot be denied that as a class they hardly ever fell below this high expectation. The occupation of the Brāhmaṇs, although on the decline, had not yet lost its ancient lustre and dignity and there were men among them still who were, as of yore, capable of fearless acts of self-sacrifice for the good of the community. The Brāhmaṇs were not only the educators of the nation but also its lawgivers, its judges, and at times its acknowledged head and dictator in social matters. Although literature was not their profession, their sphere of usefulness consisted in their interest in mental and spiritual culture. But a change of the deepest kind was coming over the spirit of this ancient and honoured class. After the political storm of the century had blown over, the Brāhmaṇs found themselves utterly neglected, nay, humiliated and

The humiliation of the Brāhmaṇs.

ruined. They had not only lost the patronage at court and of the great landed aristocracy, who always revered their learning and piety, but they also found themselves losing, together with their ancient prestige, the free charitable gifts of landed property to which they mainly looked up for their support. A regulation was passed in 1793 for enquiry into the validity of various existing *Lākherāj* grants: and as a direct result of this, many of these presumed charitable grants were cancelled. This dealt a severe blow to the poor Brāhmaṇs, who thus shorn of their land and their glory, became more and more dependent than ever for their living on the gifts of the lower classes to whose tastes and superstitions they were now compelled to pander. The most enlightened among them, no doubt, remained isolated or retired into obscurity in moody silence; but the majority of them did everything in their power to please the mob, who were now almost their only customers. With the fall of the Brāhmaṇs, however, there was no doubt the rise of the powerful middle class; but the ruin of this hereditary intellectual class was a loss in itself. The axe was laid at the root of ancient learning and ancient culture: the influence which produced the sublime in Hindu civilisation vanished, the influence which produced the superstitious and the ridiculous in it increased. Such was the state of knowledge and culture at the beginning of the last century that Jayanārāyaṇ Tarkapañchānan in his preface to the *Sarvadarśana Saṅgraha* had to lament that the pundits of his time never cared to read more than four books in their lifetime; and just before the foundation of Calcutta Sanscrit College, such was the ignorance of the Bengali pundits that none of them could enlighten Sir William Jones on the subject of ancient Sanscrit drama.

Inherent causes of social decline; the Caste system.

This decline of the society and the intellect of Bengal is almost synchronous with and, no doubt, was facilitated by the decay of Mohammedan rule and the prevalence of the Company's misrule; but the process, slow enough to be almost imperceptible, was, however, not due to this circumstance alone. The political and social causes no doubt hastened the decadence already afoot: but it would be hasty and unphilosophical to attribute everything to such extraneous causes. There was something wrong in the social structure itself to account for this decadence. A little reflection will show that the Hindu society carried within itself the germs of its own decay. However beneficial the institution of caste might have been to the ancient society, of which it formed the universal and natural basis, it cannot be doubted that its exclusiveness, in course of time, gave rise to a monopoly, which, like the monopoly of the mediaeval monks of Europe, proved injurious to intellectual progress beyond a certain stage. Within the small privileged hereditary class to which the spread of knowledge was confined, the arts and sciences, no doubt, were carried to a pitch of perfection, but competition, thus artificially limited, naturally gave no scope to favourable variations in intellectual development. The intellectual capacity of the individual or the class was increased at the cost of general ignorance and inferiority of the race. The system made life easy and smooth and comparatively free from that struggle and unrest which is the inexorable condition of all progress. This state of things, leading as it did to decadence, could not continue long, and under the influence of Mohammedanism and its doctrine of equality, a fresh impetus was given to progress by relaxing the restrictions of the caste system. From about the beginning

of the 16th century, we have a succession of religious and social reformers, Rāmānanda, Kabīr, Nānak, and Chaitanya, all of whom protested against caste and preached universal brotherhood. It was this impulse which gave an early impetus to the vernacular literatures of India; for these reformers, unlike the learned Sanscritists, preached to the people in the language of the people, and their teachings were embodied in voluminous works which enriched the vernacular literatures. But, although the rigour of the caste system was for a time overcome and a healthy feeling for equality was abroad, the evils of the time-honoured institution, firmly rooted through centuries into the social fabric, could not be eradicated in a day. They continued to do their work and hastened the decadence which, in spite of the attempts of these religious reformers, had become inevitable; and the anti-caste influence of the British contact and of European literature only intensified the change already set on foot by the Baiṣṇaba and other movements. Although at this critical time, the East India Company in England and in India, sunk to the lowest depth of philistinism, apprehended the spread of knowledge and western ideas fatal to the British rule, yet it was fortunate that there were self-sacrificing missionaries and schoolmasters ready for the work, and a few far-sighted statesmen who, notwithstanding the narrow policy of the government at home, thought it "god-like bounty to bestow expansion of intellect." The empire in India had been, moreover, founded at a time when the tide was turning, when Europe was in the throes of a great Revolution, which, considered politically, socially, and intellectually, is one of the greatest in modern history. The wave of liberalism which was to pass through Europe

Mohammedan and British influence on it.

could not be expected to leave untouched the shores of the newly-acquired empire in India.

Protective influence of religion in social matters.

One of the chief causes why the evils of caste system could not be eradicated in a day was the protective spirit of the Hindu religion in social matters. Notwithstanding that historians of civilisation like Buckle[1] deny to religion any influence at all, Hindu religion has always governed Hindu society, and it is through the institution of caste that this influence has been remarkably felt. However much Hinduism has been marked by intellectual toleration and adaptability to its environment, its sway, in social matters at least, has always been despotic. Not only the individual but also the social life of the people has been moulded by their religion for evil or for good. The entire existence of a Hindu may be said without exaggeration to be a round of religious duties; and in social matters, hedged in by minute rules and restrictions, the various classes of the community have had little room for expansion and progress beyond a certain stage. But this domination of religion over society became more and more stringent with the decay of Hindu civilisation during the later Paurāṇik and the Mohammedan periods. Hence arose some of the absurd restrictions and retrogressive customs which the efforts of a succession of religious reformers from Kabīr and Chaitanya down to Rām Mohan Rāy have not been able completely to remove. That the Hinduism of the 18th and the early 19th century had been a strange compound of the sublime and the ridiculous is thus easily

Its effect under the Mohammedan rule.

[1] *History of Civilisation in England*, Vol. I, Ch. V.

intelligible. With the fall of the Brāhmaṇs and general decadence of social and intellectual life in the country, there was also a partial decadence of the religious life and ideals of the people, imperceptibly making its headway from the Mohammedan times. It does not concern us here as to how much of this was due to decadent Buddhism or decadent Bai-ṇabism, or how far the aboriginal ethnical element in Lower Bengal reacted upon it. The mass of superstitions had always existed and still everywhere exists: but from this time onwards, there was a deliberate rejection of the spiritual side of the old faith and a corresponding identification with the semi-aboriginal superstitions of the masses. Public opinion on religious matters was low, although the religiosity of the people cannot be denied; and the undoubted belief in the absolving efficacy of superstitious rites calmed the imagination and allayed the terrors of conscience. Empty rituals, depraved practices, and even horrid ceremonies like hook-swinging, human sacrifice, and infanticide partially justify the unsparing abuse of our religion by the missionaries.

Religious life at the beginning of the 19th century

But what the missionaries could not perceive in their proselytising zeal was that the religious life of the Hindu had never been quite extinct. There had been decay since the Mohammedan rule, aggravated by various complex causes, but not death; there had been an increase of feebleness, but not absolute inanition. An age which produced the *Gaṅgābhakti-taraṅgiṇī*, *Harilīlā*, or the devotional songs of Rām-prasād could not indeed be said to be devoid of religious life. The devotional fervour of Śrī Chaitanya, the intellectual ideas of naiyāyik Raghunātha, the ritualistic doctrines of smārta Raghunandan,

decayed but not dead.

The four divergent currents.

and the mystic spiritualism of the tāntric Kṛṣṇānanda —the four divergent forces which have always exercised great influence on Hindu society since the 16th century—had never lost their domination even in this era of decadence. The protective spirit of Hinduism and the political and social vicissitudes consequent upon Mohammedan rule had no doubt been injurious to religious progress, but in spite of this impediment religion had always influenced the social, moral, and intellectual progress of the nation. From the earliest time down to the present day, religious struggle and religious revival have always played an important part in the history of the nation's intellectual progress. It is partly for this reason that notwithstanding four centuries of earnest preaching by Roman Catholics and two centuries of earnest preaching by Protestants, Christianity has made little impression upon the Hindus, especially amongst the upper classes. Religious life was never dead but dormant. It is true that religious ideal have always changed from time to time and moulded itself to some extent to the necessities of the age, and this will also be evident from a study of the various phases of the historic development of our religion. At this stage of decadence, it could not be expected to remain in an unalloyed state. It had gone through many convulsions and alterations in the previous age, and many empty dogmas and gross superstitions had naturally gathered around it. But, however much this state of religion appeared repulsive to the prejudiced eyes of the zealous missionaries or of the enthusiastic "Young Bengal," who proud of the new light, picked up an inveterate hatred of everything old, still in its essence and on the doctrinal side, it was almost invulnerable. The reactions which have followed

Change of religious ideals in the 18th and the early 19th century.

Religious reactions of the 19th century.

in favour of what may be called rationalistic Hinduism and other religious movements in the 19th century bear witness to its inward strength as well as to the inherited spirituality of the Hindu.

These facts partly explain the literary barrenness of the period between 1760 and 1800.

It is obvious that under these political, social and intellectual conditions, no literature worth the name could easily flourish. With the ruin of the zemindars and the degradation of the Brāhmaṇs, who constituted respectively the aristocracy of wealth and the aristocracy of intellect, a process of disintegration had begun in the social fabric which ended in an absolute dissolution of all social solidarity. It took nearly half a century before there was a general subsidence of these effects and a new order of things could take the place of the old. With a reconstruction of art and ideal, there was indeed the birth of a new world and a new literature but, generally speaking, from the 18th century to the middle of the 19th, we have only rude unshaped writings, interesting to the student, but no masterpiece, acceptable to all. It was essentially a transitional stage, and there can be no doubt that these vicissitudes of the 18th century and the monotonous material and intellectual development of the first half of the 19th robbed Bengali literature of many an imaginative writer. Calcutta had not yet settled down into a metropolis, and with the dispersal of the Mohammedan government and the Hindu zemindars, there was no fixed intellectual centre which would have brought the advantages of social solidarity among those who still retained literary instincts and aspirations. Bhāratchandra died in 1760 and in a short time occurred

The death of Bhārat-chandra in 1760 marks the decay of the older current in literature.

also the deaths of Durgāprasād and Rām-prasād. With these last great names, we are at the end of what remained of ancient Bengali literature. During the continuance of the dual system of government between '65 and '72, the older poets, one by one, passed away; and none remained who could for a time step into their vacant place. Between the death of Bhārat-chandra in 1760 and the first appearance of Īśvar Gupta in *Saṁbād-prabhākar* of 1830, there came an interregnum of more than half a century, during which there was no man who had been strong enough to seize the unclaimed sceptre. The only pretenders were the Kabiwalas, but they never rose to that level of artistic merit and sustained literary composition which would have enabled them to strike a commanding figure on the empty stage. Who would think of placing Haru Ṭhākur or Rām Basu side by side with Bhārat-chandra or Rām-prasād? These Kabiwalas left behind them few things of permanent literary value; for although some of them were men of undoubted poetic power, they never cultivated literature for its own sake, but composed their songs chiefly to please their new patrons in society—the upstart zemindars, the wealthy speculators, or the illiterate mass whose chief amusement consisted of these songs, *pāñchālis*, or *jātrās*. The Kabi literature, therefore, is one of a very composite character, and side by side with the higher flights, we have interspersed not a little amount of flat colloquial verbiage which no stretch of literary charity

The interregnum till the emergence of the new literature was broken chiefly, if not wholly, by the Kabiwalas,

some of whom were men of undoubted powers.

Their place in literature not very high.

would ever call poetic in the true sense of the term. The literary ideal was not, as can be expected, very high, and its tone not always commendable: yet one thing most remarkable about these songs, which puts them in sharp contrast with the literature which Bhārat-chandra set in fashion, was its comparative freedom from the stamp of ornateness or erudite classicality as well as from the vitiated moral tone which defaces the writings of many a great poet of this period. Yet in spite of these and other merits, none of the Kabiwalas had reached that standard of literary excellence which would have enabled them to emulate the more substantial writings of the older poets although they contributed some truly beautiful pieces to the literature of national songs. Fallen on evil days, their genius seems never to have received its fullest scope, and besides keeping our literature back from absolute death during the period of interregnum, their work seems to possess historically no other permanent value. They act as a link keeping up the continuity of our literary history and, though by themselves affording an interesting field of study, they belong through their literary filiation and inherited artistic tradition to the age preceding our era.

But they did their best, during this long period of barrenness, to keep it back from absolute death.

By the beginning of the 19th century, however, the old order was changing, yielding place to new. A new literature, a new spirit, and a new order of society were gradually taking the place of the time-honoured institutions which had held their sway over the country for centuries. We often find in literary history that with some great revolution, political, social or religious, literature receives a fresh impetus. We need hardly recall the example of the

Effect of the revolutionary changes which the British occupation of Bengal brought about.

French Revolution from which dates a period of literary activity which has culminated in the rich literary after-growths of modern Europe. But the popular opinion, long and actually entertained, that the British occupation of Bengal by itself sufficiently accounted for and directly caused the disappearance of ancient literature as distinguished from modern, is a delusion which the revived study of the literature itself would, in a great measure, help to check and correct. However great and far-reaching its effect was, the British 'conquest' no more swept away ancient Bengal and its literature and replaced it with something else than the Norman Conquest of England directly caused the disappearance of Anglo-saxon England and its literature. Modern evolutionary theory hardly leaves any room for such absolute political or literary cataclysms; and a little consideration will show that the British occupation of Bengal, like the Norman one of England, only helped and turned to good a process of decadence in literature, which had independently begun, which was going on rapidly, and which, if the political revolution had not dealt a death-blow to the exhausted literature would have landed it independently in absolute barrenness and stagnation.

The British 'conquest', as generally supposed, never swept off the old literature and replaced it with the new: it merely helped a process of decadence in literature already afoot.

In order to appreciate what effect British occupation of Bengal produced upon Bengali literature, we must realise in what state it actually had been when the new start was made. It was, as we have stated, a period of great confusion. The political and social disturbances, no doubt, as the apologist of Bengali literature often points out, were affecting men's minds, and the physical and mental fatigue consequent thereupon is responsible to a great extent for this lamented paucity of literary productions;

but if we look to the literature itself we shall see that a process of inherent decay and dissolution had already begun in it which indicated rapid decline, and which, if unchecked, might have independently led to its ultimate extinction. A change of the deepest and widest kind was coming over the spirit of Bengali literature during the years when the political destiny of India was being decided in other fields: but this change, such as it was, meant no good augury to its future course.

In spite of occasional royal patronage, as in the cases of Bidyāpati or Kabi-kaṅkaṇ, the vernacular literature before the 18th century very seldom found shelter in the courts of the wealthy, and it was never, in any sense, courtly literature. From this period, however, it began to centre round the courts of the wealthy and a new world, that of the courtier and the adventurer, was being formed. The courts of Rājā Kṛṣṇachandra of Nadīyā and of Rājā Rāj-ballabh of Dacca were notable not only for their luxury, their splendour, and their intrigues, but also for their patronage of arts and literature. But this court-influence, as it would be natural to expect in this age, was not an unmixed good. Poetry, which had hitherto consisted of simple tales of village-life or of devotional poems of rare beauty and fervour, had now to appeal exclusively to the upper classes of society whose taste and temper it naturally reflected. As on the one hand, it gained in refinement and splendour, so on the other, it lost all its pristine simplicity, and was marked with a stamp of ornateness and erudite classicality which found favour with these courts. What had been fervid and spontaneous became fantastic and elaborate: and with these new poets, some of

What this process was and how it came about.

State of Bengali literature on the eve of the 19th century.

whom were good scholars, intellect and fancy predominated over sentiment and passion, ingenuity took the place of feeling, and poetry lost its true accent. On the one hand, arose around the court of Kṛṣṇachandra the artificial school of Bhārat-chandra, whose poetry, more fanciful than delicate, more exquisite than passionate, first turned the tide in favour of ornate and artificial standards of verse-making: on the other hand, under the patronage of the rival court of Rājā Rāj-ballabh, flourished a more serious, though less poetical, group of writers who exhibit the same tendency to ornate diction and luxuriant style and the same weakness for frigid conceits but whose profundity, allegorical fancy, didactic taste, and consequent monotony present a striking contrast to the more voluptuous and attractive school at Nadīyā. Both these schools, by their excesses, marked the close of the literary age. In spite of the exquisite quality of his phrase and his numbers, that exalt him to a place all his own, Bhārat-chandra was a far greater artist than a true poet. He was a sure and impeccable master of his own craft, yet we must confess here, as everywhere, a fall of the true poetic spirit, the neap of inspiration, the preference of what catches the eye to what touches the heart. Bhārat-chandra is not very often original: yet when he imitates, he does not choose the best models but only tries to improve upon the very second-rate works of later artificial Kāvya poets like Māgha and Śrīharṣa, or even worse things from a class of degenerate Mohammedan tales of dubious taste and excellence. Poetry is increasingly regarded as a means of the display of elaborate conceits till

The existing schools of Bengali literature by their excesses gave unmistakable proof of decadence and foreshadowed the close of the literary age.

The school at Nadīyā of which Bhārat-chandra was the literary exponent.

at length nothing remains but artfulness and verbal jugglery. The consummate elegance of these writings is undoubted but the poet seldom transports. Lifeless descriptions, pompous similes, learned digressions—a style which cannot be summed up otherwise than by the term 'florid'—these mark the makeshifts by which the lack of genuine poetic emotion is sought to be made up. Pathos or tragedy in the strict and rare sense these poets seldom or never touch: and the way in which they have repainted the ideal heroes of old recall to one's mind Dryden's travesty of Milton or of Shakespeare. Admitting even the pictorial effect, the musical cadence and the wonderful spell of language which are the chief redeeming features of this poetry, the taste and style are sometimes so vitiated and vulgar that it fully deserves the nemesis of neglect which is gradually falling upon it. The degenerate court-influence went a long way not only in fostering a certain feminine langour and luxuriance of style, but it was also responsible for the taint of indecency which often mars its best passages. This grossness was, no doubt, partly conventional and sprang obviously from the poetic convention established by the later artificial schools of Sanscrit Poetry; but, even admitting this, it must be said that attempts to excuse this utter want of decency and of morals have all proved futile, and the least valid of all is that which would shield this poetry under the mantle of the classics. The *kuṭnīs* take the place of *dūtīs* of Baiṣṇaba songs; and the course of illicit love or lust, with all its intricacies of courtship, intrigue, and insolence was never suffered to flaunt itself with such shameless impudence. Even Rām-prasād, in spite of his religious songs, could not escape the contagion and the exquisite lyrics of the Kabiwalas were not wholly free from the taint.

These enormities in the existing schools of poetry certainly indicate the close of the literary age. Excess of folly in poetry, like excess of injustice in political matters, lead up to and foretell revolutions. Besides, the course of ancient Bengali itself as a whole suffered from many drawbacks which hampered its growth cruelly and which might by itself have led to its ultimate extinction. Of these drawbacks, the monotony of subject and the limitation of form were the foremost and engage the critic at once. It is true that the social and political conditions under an alien rule were never wholly favourable to the quiet development of national culture ; that the contempt with which vernacular literature had been universally held always retarded its growth ; that the Baiṣṇaba movement, even though it had wrested the monopoly of learning from the Brāhmaṇs as a class, was more a sectarian than a wide-spread national tendency and it only intensified the devotional ardour which had very few opportunities for complete secularisation ; and that literature, at least in the vernacular, was seldom cultivated for its own sake in those days when a leisured class of literary or scientific men had never arisen ; yet even these circumstances do not wholly explain the absolute limitation of subject to religion in the main, and out of religion to a little legend, a little contemporary social song, and the thinnest surplus of other matters. Glorification of gods and goddesses seems to be the ultimate object of all the poets, who could not venture to publish anything except under the borrowed garb of religion. The marvellous results accomplished even within this limitation show that there was surely nothing wrong with the genius of these poets but something was wrong in the literature itself, that its

Inherent drawbacks in the old literature itself which retarded its growth.

Limitation of subject.

theme was too narrow and limited to afford the fullest scope for development and progress.

Conservative taste.

One of the remarkable tendencies of later Hindu culture generally and of all ancient vernacular literature in particular was, that they carried the suppression of individuality too far: and that the consequence has been to exalt authority and discourage originality. Of course, nothing can be more objectionable than the obtrusive self-assertiveness of modern times, yet it must be admitted that it nevertheless furthers intellectual progress by relaxing the severity of effete conventionalities and allowing ambition freer scope and wider soaring-region. But this limitation of subject and this conservative taste were

Monotony of form.

coupled with a further limitation of ancient poetry in its form, its staple of stereotyped verses, beyond which it could never stray but which was apt to become dull, monotonous, and singsong, especially because of its sectional pauses. But the greatest drawback, which would of itself indicate the poverty of the literature in its certain aspects, was the complete absence of prose as a vehicle

Absence of prose.

of literary expression. It is true that in all literature, as the immortal jest of Molière implies, prose always comes after poetry; yet in ancient Bengali literature we have practically very little good prose at all, however late.[1]

In critically examining the literary history of Bengal in the pre-British era, it is impossible to mistake the significance of these facts: namely, that its poetry, though vigorously started under the best auspices and though

[1] Some account of the growth and development of old Bengali prose is given in App. I at the end of this volume

attaining to some measure of relative perfection, was itself failing, and that at no period of its long history, it produced prose that could be called such. There must have been something wrong in the very system, some coldness in the literary constitution to account for this decadence and this poverty. If a literature after producing great things in the past does nothing more for centuries, if it shows signs of decadence and practically limits itself to trifles, then the conclusion is irresistible that it badly wants a change. Long before the stability of British rule was beyond all question a process of decadence or dissolution had already begun which indicated a change in its spirit. The British occupation and its accompanying evils only hastened this change, so that a new era of literary history began in Bengal with the firm establishment of British rule. It is amiable but entirely unhistorical imagination which suggests that it was the British rule which entirely swept away the old literature and replaced it with the new. There was no such absolute breach of the continuity of our literary history; a change was inevitable and the British rule brought it about in the most novel and unexpected way, although it would be difficult to say what form it would have taken had there been no British occupation of Bengal.

These facts show that the decadent literature, if it were to prolong its life, needed a change, and the change was brought by the British occupation of Bengal.

The commencement of the 19th century saw a more settled order of things. Beginning with the patch-work of the Regulating Act of 1774, vigorous attempts were made to reform the abuses of misrule which had been bringing disgrace to British ideas of justice and honour, and the permanence of British rule was now more or less a settled

The beginning of the 19th century.

fact. The Company in the meantime had been extending its territories beyond the limits of Bengal. Hastings had boldly thrown aside the mask of dual government which Clive had thought so expedient to wear. But even Hastings, boldly ambitious of founding an Empire in India, could not carry out what he devised. The records of the period give us some glimpses of good intentions but there was little of actual performance. From Cornwallis's time however, we enter upon a brighter period. Cornwallis had greater freedom from interference or control, and his noble rank enabled him to demand his own terms from the wise-heads at Leadenhall Street. In spite of Thornton's strictures, it cannot be denied that Cornwallis realised for the first time that the governed as well as the governors ought to be considered in all system of good government. It was he who gave a better moral tone to the civil service. It is not necessary here to trace step by step this gradual process of political reconstruction from Cornwallis's time onward or enter into the details of every scheme of reform or every administrative measure. The general effect of these changes was that the Company was gradually being transformed from a trading corporation into a sovereign power. The idea that Bengal was an estate which yielded a large rental but involved none of the responsibilities of government had not, it is true, totally disappeared ; but none of the administrators since this time can be regarded as mere land-stewards of a private property. Narrow views still prevailed but we find a liberal-minded Governor-General like Wellesley laying stress upon the fact that the Factory had grown into an Empire and that the civil servants should not consider themselves as mere agents of a commercial concern but as responsible officers and administrators whose duty it was to understand the people.

The revenue system began to be placed on a secure footing. There was greater peace and order throughout the country, and the civil, criminal, and police functions of the government were beginning to be organised. The rural administration was taken in hand and Calcutta was forming itself into a metropolis. In 1771, we find Calcutta a straggling village of mud-houses, the whole of the ground south of Chandpal Ghat thickly covered with jungle and forest-trees. From 1780 onwards, we read in the Calcutta papers of frequent complaints about the indescribably filthy condition of the streets and roads which is fully confirmed by the account of Grandpré in 1790, who tells us of the canals and cess-pools reeking with putrefying animal matter—the awful stench coming out of them—the myriads of flies and flocks of animals and birds acting as scavenger.[1] In the times of Hastings and Francis and for a long time after that, dacoity and highway robbery within a mile of the seat of government and of the Supreme Court were, we have seen, crimes exceedingly prevalent. But when Hastings' government abolished the provincial Revenue Councils and transferred from Murshidabad to Calcutta the seat of the Supreme Courts of Justice as well as the head-seat of revenue administration and the Khalsa, Calcutta was being deliberately designed to become ultimately the political capital of Bengal.[2] By 1800, a busy

Calcutta settling down into a metropolis.

[1] This state of things continued for a long time and we here of constant complaints of this not only in the English papers and also in the *Samāchār-darpaṇ* as late 1818. See the *Samāchār-darpaṇ*, Nov. 14, 1818; May 27, 1820 etc. (the quotations, will be found given in my article on the above-mentioned paper in *Sāhitya Pariṣat Patrikā* vol. 24, no. 3, p. 163.)

[2] Gleig, *Memoirs of Warren Hastings*, vol. i. p. 263.

and flourishing town was being built up[1] ; and attracted by its commercial importance, of which, notwithstanding the monopoly of the Company and its discouragement of private enterprise, Stavorinus, writing so far back as 1770, bears strong testimony, many Bengali families as well as men of other nationalities began to settle down. From the time of the inroads of the Mahrattas, people had fled from the interior and settled down on the banks of the Ganges, close to Calcutta, where in course of time, there arose several flourishing towns while the rest of Bengal lay under disorder and misrule. Bengal in the times past had many capitals and many centres of learning, and all these now converged to the few spots along the Ganges-bank and chiefly to the metropolis. It is natural to expect that here, with Calcutta as its centre, began the earliest efforts to diffuse knowledge, reform abuses, formulate new ideas, and build up a new order of society and literature. From this arises the importance of the metropolis in later Bengali literature—an importance which will be more fully realised when we consider that refined urbanity is one of the main characteristics which differentiates the modern literature from its pre-British predecessor. If the ancient literature, as one of its historians says, was a gift of the lower to the higher classes and was fostered chiefly in the remote and secluded

Intellectual and social centres springing up along the banks of the Ganges, close to Calcutta.

Importance of the city and the metropolis in later Bengali literature.

[1] On the history and topography of old Calcutta, literature is scattered and plentiful. One may however consult with advantage A. K. Roy, *A Short History of Calcutta* ; Rainey, *Topographical and Historical Sketch of Calcutta, 1876* ; Busteed, *Echoes from Old Calcutta* ; Cotton, *Calcutta Old and New* ; articles in *Bengal Past and Present* and references given therein ; Long, *Calcutta in Olden time.*

Urbanity of modern Bengali literature.

village-homes, the modern literature is mostly the work of the educated man of the city, and a gift from him spreading down to the lowest classes. In studying modern literature, we must steadily keep our eyes fixed upon these centres of influences, of which Calcutta and Śrīrāmpur, as we shall see, become all-important in the first stage of our history.

Growth of Calcutta and its awakening to new influences.

In these crowded cities, which had drawn into it the flower of the Bengali families from all parts of the country and which afforded endless opportunities of intercourse between the European and the Bengali communities, a new era was beginning in the social and literary history of the people. Happily for the country, the hour of awakening to new thoughts had dawned. On the 10th October, 1800, we find the missionaries at Śrīrāmpur thus writing home: "There appears to be a favourable change in the general temper of the people. Commerce has roused new thoughts and awakened new energies, so that hundreds, if we could skilfully teach them, would crowd to learn the English language."[1] Hitherto Education had been totally neglected. The history of English education in Bengal has a very important bearing on the history of the intellectual progress and will be sketched in its proper place; it would be enough to indicate here that during the early days of the Company's rule, the promotion of education, neither here nor in England, was regarded as a duty of the government; on the contrary, the safety of the Indian Empire was thought to depend

State of English education in the beginning of the 19th century.

[1] Smith, *Life of William Carey*, (New reprint, 1912), p. 274; Eustace Carey, *Memoirs of William Carey*, pp. 406-7.

upon keeping the people immersed in ignorance. It was not until Wellesley's time that more liberal ideas began to gain ground. Thus the history of education in this early period, as we shall see, consisted chiefly of the educational efforts of private individuals who had set up schools for instruction in the rudiments of learning. Such small isolated attempts are obviously by their very nature bound to be transitory; and such private schools could not surely be expected to answer the larger purpose of national education. Such humble efforts date so far back as 1747[1]; but the desire of prospering in commercial enterprise under the new condition of things served as a great incentive to English education, as Persian education, now declining, had been eagerly sought for under the Mohammedan administration. In 1796, only a few Bengali children were taught by European school-masters: but gradually a set of Bengali teachers possessing a smattering of English came into existence and opened schools. In those days, however, penmanship, quickness in calculations, and a knowledge of accounts were considered greater accomplishments than an accurate study of English itself; and even men like Rām-dulāl De, we are told, never cared to make a better acquaintance with English than picking up a few broken phrases of colloquial speech; for such knowledge was enough to make them serve as ship-sarkārs, banians, and writers and ultimately win for them colossal fortunes. Thus although the study of English was sought for, no systematic course of instruction was given or required; and for a time a low and broken English, or half-English and half-Bengali gibberish was spoken, of which humorous specimens may be found in

[1] Long, *Hand-Book to Bengal Missions*, pp. 441-451. But see *Good Old Days*, vol. i, p. 893 et seq.

Rāj-nārāyaṇ Basu's delightful little sketch of that time. Sometimes, to eke out this half-diction, gesture-language was used, somewhat in the manner in which Gulliver spoke to the Lilliputians.

State of Bengali education.

The state of Bengali education, if not in a worse, was at least in no better plight. The mass of Bengali manuscripts recently unearthed by patient investigations of modern scholars was mostly unknown, and the literature of the time, possessing hardly any printed books, consisted chiefly of a handful of works, Manasā, Dharmamaṅgal, Mahābhārat of Kāśīdās, Rāmāyaṇ of Kṛttibās, Chaṇḍī of Kabi-kaṅkaṇ, Annadāmaṅgal of Bhārat-chandra, and probably the songs of Rām-prasād. The only works which were read in the Pāṭh-śālās, we learn on the authority of the biographer of Rām-kamal Sen[1], were Gurudakṣiṇā and the rules of arithmetic by Śubhaṅkar. There were neither good schools nor were there proper elementary text-books for purposes of instruction; and even a decade later, this was one of the initial difficulties which the School Society felt in carrying out its worthy object of Bengali education. Such was the state of Bengali learning at this time that we learn from a writer in the *Friend of India*[2] "If they can *write* at all, each character, to say nothing of orthography, is made in so irregular and indistinct a manner, that comparatively few of them could read what is written by another: and some of them can scarcely wade through that has been written by themselves, after any lapse of time. If they have learnt to *read*, they can

[1] Pearychand Mitra, *Life of Ramkomul Sen* (1880), p. 7.

[2] vol. ii, p.392, quoted in *Cal Rev.* vol. xiii, 1850. p. 132. See also *Quarterly Friend of India*, vol. iv. p. 152. This remark is confirmed by what Forster says in the Introduction to his *Vocabulary* with regard to the uncertainty of Bengali spelling and Bengali script.

seldom read five words together, without stopping to make out the syllables, and often scarcely two, even when the writing is legible. The case is precisely the same with the knowledge of *figures*." These observations, however, coming, as they do perhaps, from a missionary, whose personal knowledge of the country and its inhabitants might not perhaps have extended beyond narrow limits, must be taken subject to this reservation that although this might be the picture of the general state of knowledge and culture at this time, yet there still lived in dignified isolation a few learned pundits in the remote villages and that the days of Sanscrit learning were not quite over. But even these Brāhmaṇs, with a few exceptions, were now, as we have stated, a fallen race; and the exclusive genius of Brāhmaṇism in its lowest phase not only barred the masses from the temple of knowledge but also made themselves neglect the vernacular as "Prakrit" dialect fit only for "demons and women." So far indeed had they carried their contempt for their mother-tongue that while they cultivated the learned language with assiduity, they, in many instances, prided themselves on writing the language of the people with inaccuracy and sometimes in an almost unintelligible semi-barbaric sanscritised style. We shall see some specimens of the latter kind even in the writings of the more accomplished Pundits of the Fort William College. It is natural to expect that these so-called pundits should strenuously discourage the use of the vernacular among the people and set their face against its improvement. The neglect of the vernaculars, especially Bengali, had reached such a stage that when Dr. Carey began to lecture at Fort William College, he could hardly muster a class; and the same learned doctor when he visited Nadīyā, not many years ago the illustrious centre of Bengali language and literature, "he could not discover

more than 10 separate works, all in manuscripts, as the whole literature of 30,000,000 of people up to that time."[1]

The state of learning in Bengal may not be unfitly compared to that in England after the ravages of the Danes, of which King Alfred said "there was a time when people came to this island for instruction, now we must get it from abroad, if we want it". For, under this state of things, it is obvious that no impetus coming from within, if improvement is to be effected, it must come from outside. When we picture to ourselves adventurers, ne'er-do-wells, plain townsfolk and country-folk, peaceful home-stayers in the remote villages and commercial banians in the crowded cities, and later on, well-to-do English gentlemen pushing their way up the river, laying out broad plantations and sultanising over the whole neighbourhood, we can hardly expect any manifestation of the literary genius in such an environment. With the mental and physical absorption incident upon social and political disorders in the country, with no metropolis to furnish the needed contact of mind with mind, with repressive material needs causing large drain upon one's physical energy, and above all, with the decay of artistic impulses and literary traditions, it is no wonder that the nation produced little literature and developed little culture of importance. The impulse at length came from outside. We cannot but acknowledge with feelings of mingled shame and gratefulness that the first and earliest efforts at ameleorating our condition were made by a handful of philanthropic Europeans, both civilians and missionaries, who in their

Improvement comes from without.

European workers, civilians and missionaries, in the field.

[1] Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 202.

liberal views moved far ahead of their age. In spite of the Cornwallis Code and the public policy of exclusion, the ruler and the ruled had begun to live in greater amity and fellow-feeling. With the assumption of the responsibilities of political government, the ruling classes began to take greater interest in the lives of the people committed to their care. In vain do we seek in modern Bengal philanthropists of the type of Colvin, Palmer, Carey, Marshman, and David Hare, whose memory is still gratefully cherished by the Bengali-speaking race.[1] No doubt, the Company's servants hitherto had never regarded India as their home but they had been always sojourners in a far country whose only ambition was to obtain riches as soon as possible and return home as gentlemen of leisure. This was one of the underlying causes of the constant disputes between the Company and its self-seeking agents; and it is no wonder that throughout the 18th century constant complaints of corruption, peculation, and general dishonesty of the agents are to be found in the Letter-Books of the Company. But with stability of British rule, when commercialism was declining as a dominating factor in the Company's policy, and with the realisation of greater administrative responsibility, this order of things was gradually changing. Two obvious reasons naturally strengthened the ties which bound these foreigners to this country. The first is that in those days of weary and perilous voyage round the Cape, men who came out to India and had a taste for the easy going (sometimes reckless) life of pleasure and profit in the tropics, had no mind to return home very soon; while in the next place, the

Relation between the European and the Bengali community in those days.

[1] The couplet goes thus (quoted in Raj-narāyan Basu's *Ekāl O Sekāl*).
হেষ্টার কব্বিন্ পামরশ্চ কেরী মার্শমনস্তথা। পঞ্চ গোরাঃ স্মরেন্নিত্যং মহাপাতকনাশনং॥

number of Europeans who lived here was very small and they consisted mostly of officials; for not only was the climate unsuitable to Europeans generally[1] but the policy of the government also regarded the introduction of free-trade and Europeans to be dangerous to the safety of the newly acquired empire. But whatever might be the reason, there is no gainsaying the fact that most of these Europeans, who had lived here for a long time, had a genuine affection for the country, and some of them went so far as to adopt the manners and customs and even the dress of the Bengali population. Enjoying the *hooka*, whose "long ornamental snake coiled round and round the rails of the chair" was one of the customs, among others, immortalised by Thackeray, which was long fashionable[2] with these official and non-official 'Nabobs'; and it would surprise many a modern reader to learn that it even fascinated the ladies, on whose part "it was considered a high compliment to show a preference for a gentleman by tasting his *hooka*".

Study of Bengali by European settlers.

Besides this affection of the early European settlers for their land of adoption, which prompted them to express themselves occasionally in its language, there were other purely political and utilitarian grounds which

[1] Cf. Sir Philip Francis's impressions of his residence in this country. Macaulay, writing after 60 years with the experience of a much improved country, speaks almost in the same strain in his characteristically sweeping way.

[2] A picture of this custom and manner of life is preserved for us in the pages of the immortal *Ālāler Gharer Dulāl*. We read in Carey's *Dialogues* (3rd Ed. 1818, p. 3) that one of the indispensably necessary servant of the Englishman's household was a hookabardar or a man to prepare his *hooka*. Stavorinus (vol. i, 345) also relates how on the occasion of his visit to Governor Cartier at Calcutta, he was treated with the *hooka* at an orientally sumptuous banquet given in his honour. See also Busteed, *op. cit.* p. 157; *Good Old Days*, vol. i. 63.

induced them to the study and encouragement of the vernacular. Time was coming when Bengali should, both officially as well as popularly, be the recognised vernacular; and both Halhed and Forster, the two earliest important European writers in Bengali, rightly insist at some length upon the absurdity and inconvenience of continuing Persian as the language of the Court and the market-place and advocate more wide-spread and general use of Bengali in its place. Exigencies of administration which had made it almost obligatory for the governors to learn the language of the governed hastened this movement towards the neglected vernacular. The missionaries, on the other hand, found out early that if they were to reach the people directly they must first learn their language and gain a thorough knowledge of their modes of thinking and feeling. Systematic mission-work always presupposed a thorough training in their language. All these and other reasons first impelled the early European settlers to take to a systematic study of the neglected vernacular. When therefore with the disappearance of the old Bengali writers, Bengali literature had been sent adrift to shift for itself as best as it could, it was taken up and fostered by strangers hailing from distant lands whom fortunately political, personal, or utilitarian reasons, if not always the love of the language or the literature itself, first urged to its elaborate study under entirely new conditions.

Its political and utilitarian ground.

This brief and necessarily incomplete picture of the general state of this country from 1760 to 1800 will, to some extent, exhibit the new conditions under which modern Bengali literature first came into being. The instability and perturbation, consequent upon these political

Concluding remarks on the significance of the general history of the time to its literary history.

changes as well as the almost entire disintegration of social solidarity will no doubt explain the external circumstances which retarded the growth of literature, but the literature itself since the days of Bhārat-chandra had been showing inherent signs of exhaustion and decay, which was only hastened, instead of being checked, by political and social revolutions. The necessarily slow and laborious process of reconstruction which followed upon these vicissitudes absorbed men's mind for more than half a century from 1800. This will explain not only why we do not come across any great and important writer before we reach the age of Michael or Baṅkim but it will also exhibit very clearly how literary movements in Bengal had perforce been closely bound up with political, social, religious, and other movements in the first half of the 19th century. Every great writer of this period of transition was of necessity a politician, a social reformer, and a religious enthusiast. We need hardly cite, for illustration, the long list of such important names as those of Rām-mohan Rāy, Kṛṣṇamohan Bandyopādhyay, Akṣay Datta, Debendranāth Ṭhākur, Īśvar-chandra Bidyā-sāgar, Ṭek-chānd, or Rājendralal Mitra. Even in the next generation Baṅkim-chandra could not keep himself entirely free from this universal tendency. Politics, social reform, and religious revival went hand in hand with literary creation. From 1825 to 1858, if not in the period actually under review in this volume, we shall have to extend our vision and include in our consideration various aspects of national history other than the one which is merely literary. To treat Bengali Literature in the 19th century as a series of isolated phenomenon is to give a wrong historical perspective, for here, as everywhere, literary thought and

Literary movements in the 19th century closely bound up with political, social, and other movements.

contemporary events are two inseparable aspects of national history. It is true that during the period between 1800 and 1825, with which more specially the present enquiry is concerned, these tendencies did not come into such bold relief as in the period immediately following upon it, yet for the understanding of the general drift, the historian of literature must from the beginning keep in view the relation of literature to the political and social history of the time; and this, apart from all reference to the theory of the insensible moulding of the literary mind and art by the considerations of race, time, or circumstance, will sufficiently make clear the necessity of devoting tedious pages to a general description of the state of this country at the outset of our literary history.

The immediate effect of the political and social vicissitudes of the second half of the eighteenth century was depreciating in the extreme. The old Bengali literature, which had been subsiding gradually into decrepitude and decay, practically disappeared. The Kabiwalas, the few isolated writers in the old style, the authors of *Pāñchāli*, and the host of inferior imitators of Bhāratchandra had no doubt kept up the continuity of literary history and maintained, even with declining powers, the ancient trend of thought and feeling. But it was an age not conspicuous for the appreciation of high ideas nor for any great enthusiasm for literary ventures. The decadence, inspite of these belated efforts of an inferior, if not an insignificant, band of writers, was rapidly hastened and the necessity of an external stimulus, which alone could have given a new lease of life to the declining literature, was urgently felt. Such an external stimulus was not forthcoming until sometime had elapsed and tranquillity

Absence of literary ventures in the first period of our history: how to be explained.

had been attained, until the rich and plentiful literature of the West, which under the peculiar circumstances was alone capable of furnishing the needed impetus, had been made accessible to the literary men of Bengal. In the meantime, the alien rulers of Bengal, brought up in the habits of unchecked power and in the ignorance and passion of an adventurous life, cared little for culture or literature. The general people of the country, among whom literary traditions and aspirations had been all but extinct or had not found scope for free play, were apathetic to literary culture and devoted their attentions, in this troublesome time, to the more urgent and engrossing material necessities of life. The first step, therefore, that had to be taken, before literary venture could be possible, was towards diffusion of knowledge, spread of education, and promotion of literary tendencies. The first half of the 19th century, therefore, was entirely taken up in the realisation of these objects. It was necessary to prepare text-books, to translate standard works from foreign languages, to reprint older classics from inaccessible manuscripts, and in this way generally to furnish a leaven for elevating the decaying intellectual life of the country. This was the work chiefly of the foreign writers in Bengali and their colleagues, the Pundits of the Fort William College, who were pioneers in various departments of vernacular writing and who wrote, not with any personal literary ambition but with the more modest yet useful object of promoting general education. To their efforts, therefore, we chiefly owe, in a very practical sense, if not the regeneration of our literature, at least the regeneration of

Necessity of a regeneration of the general intellectual life in the country before a renewal of literature could be made possible.

Importance of the work of the European writers in this respect.

intellectual activities in the country. It is not in the least degree correct to say, as it has been often enthusiastically said, that it is the missionary, especially Dr. Carey, who created modern Bengali Literature. The creation of modern literary Bengali covers a period of more than half a century from Carey's time and literary style, in the strict sense of the term, was not attained until a generation later when a band of youthful Bengali writers had come into the field, equipped in all the wealth of the new knowledge. It is true, indeed, that the missionaries gave an impetus to vernacular writing when it was generally neglected. But at the same time it must be borne in mind that we cannot fasten the parentage of modern Bengali upon the missionaries only, much less upon Dr. Carey alone, and that literature was never the sole object of the European writers but education or evangelisation. If their work fostered literature, it was not due to any definite intention on their part to do so, but it was an incidental result of what they had done for the revival of education in Bengal. A national literature, whether ancient or modern, is the outcome of a long process of development and even Carey himself had realised very early that, in spite of the efforts of the foreigners, the best way of building up such a literature would be inducing the children of the soil themselves to take to earnest literary work. The missionary, even if he is a talented man like Carey, did hardly produce anything strictly deserving the name of literature. The importance of the missionary-work in Bengali does not lie in this; the literature of to-day is work not of Carey, Halhed, or Forster but of the people of the soil, of Mṛtyunjay, of Rām-mohan, of Baṅkim-chandra, of Michael Madhusūdan. The missionaries, however, did a great work in the first

Impetus given to the spread of education and general culture.

quarter of the nineteenth century in supplying the needed impetus to education by founding schools, writing elementary school-books, and diffusing knowledge through the medium of Bengali—all which however had a more wide and far-reaching effect than what they were actually intended to produce.

Foreign intrusion under the circumstances unavoidable; its good effects.

We may resent this foreign intrusion at the outset of our history but under the circumstances and in the environment such as they were, it could not have been otherwise. No doubt, the hour had come for such a regeneration and reconstruction. Had there been no foreign workers in the field, the work, however delayed, would not certainly have remained in abeyance. But the missionaries were the first to take up the work in right earnest, and, in this respect, the importance of these early half-forgotten foreign writers can never be exaggerated. Of course, as in all early periods of literary history, the work done here chiefly consisted of translation and adaptation; yet it must be admitted that there is hardly any department of useful knowledge which these European writers did not touch. It is true that they could not adorn whatever they touched; but when we consider the large number of workers in the field—Carey, Marshman, Ward, Haughton, Yates, Morton, Pearson, Mack, Pearce, Miller, Harley, May, Stewart, to mention at random a few of the more well-known—their earnest philanthropic zeal, their unflagging diligence, the extraordinary variety, extent and influence of their writings, we cannot surely speak lightly of these pioneer writers.

It is easier to disclaim foreign influence and talk of independence than actually to attain it. The literary history of Bengal in the 19th century is really the history

of the influence of European ideas on Bengali thought. We can indeed dismiss, without much serious loss, the early European writers, who had certainly their own ulterior objects in their assiduous study of the vernacular and whose writings, considered as literature, possess little or no intrinsic merit. But we cannot dismiss so easily those immaterial immigrants, known as influences, which came in with the first European settler in the land and brought on by degrees a conflict and a revolution in our ideas and modes of life. When necessity had brought the East and the West side by side, it would be idle to quote Kipling's famous dictum of the unchanging East or assert ourselves independent of all contact or influence of western ideas. The pioneer efforts of the missionary and the school-master for diffusing knowledge and culture through the medium of Bengali had surely a more wide-reaching effect than that of giving temporary impetus to dormant intellectual or literary activities; for the literature which had been brought into being through the influence of western ideas was only one effect of a vaster revolution in thought, manners, and religion which had taken place in this country through our contact with the West. It is out of this conflict of the eastern with the western ideals that our modern literature has grown; and the rude early efforts of the missionary and the school-master, by propagating western ideas, had paved the way for this peculiar development of culture and literature in Bengal. It is with the missionary and the school-master, therefore, that we must begin our study of the history of this national progress as reflected through the vernacular literature. It is they who have laid the

Contact with the West, and influence of western ideas on modern literature.

What the European writers did for the spread and acceptance of these ideas.

foundations upon which the vast fabric of present-day literature is based, and every historical survey must equally embrace and define the place of the pioneer who did the spade-work as well as that of the mature littérateur who wins the laurel-wreath of later glories.

CHAPTER III

EARLIEST EUROPEAN WRITERS.

It is not before the firm establishment of the British rule in Bengal, in the beginning of the 19th century, that the early European settlers came in touch with Bengali language and literature. Before this, there is no trace of systematic effort in this direction, although several works have been discovered which belong to a period earlier than 1800. Of these works, it is not easy, however, to determine with certainty what Anglo-Bengali writing can claim the distinction of being the first publication by a European writer. Grierson in two papers in the *Journal* and *Proceedings* of the Asiatic Society of Bengal,[1] holds that the so-called Bengali rendering of the Lord's Prayer in Chamberlayne's *Syllage*, published in 1715, is perhaps the earliest extant attempt at Bengali composition by a European writer. This *Syllage* is a collection of translations of the Lord's Prayer into various languages, prepared by John Chamberlayne and David Wilkins. This work actually contains a plate purporting to represent a translation in Bengali which is headed "Bengalica." But it has been shown

Early publications by European writers.

Early isolated attempts.

[1] *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, vol. xlii, 1893, p. 42ff. and *Proceedings* of the same Society, 1895, p. 89. The plate is given in the *Proceedings*. See also Grierson, *Linguistic Survey*, vol. v, pt. i, p. 23. The characters are hardly Bengali.

that this unintelligible jargon is not Bengali at all : and Wilkins himself confesses in the preface to that work that he had been unable to obtain a Bengali rendering (which language he thought to be all but extinct !) but that he had written a Malay version in the so-called Bengali character. Grierson also mentions[1] that in the *Orientalisch-und-occidentalischer Sprachmeister* compiled by Johann Friedrich Fritz (Leipzig, 1748); the Bengali alphabet given as a specimen is said to have been taken from the *Aurneck Sceb*, apparently a life of a Aurangzeb, by Georg Jacob Kehr. But of this latter book no trace remains.

So-called Bengali version of Lord's Prayer in Chamberlayne's *Sylloge*.

Aurneck Sceb.

Leaving aside these isolated and tentative efforts, real attempt at sustained Bengali composition did not begin till the time when the Portuguese, before the English, had begun to establish themselves in Bengal. The Portuguese, by 1530, had settled in many parts of this country and carried on an extensive trade in the chief sea-ports. The number of people claiming themselves to be of Portuguese descent was in the 17th century very large and Portuguese language had established itself as the *lingua franca* of the country.[2] Among these Portuguese adventurers and pirates, however, we can never expect any serious attempt at literary composition : but the Portuguese missionaries seem to have done some work in this direction. Bernier,[3] about 1660, speaks of "Portugal fathers and missionaries" in Bengal and says that in Bengal there are

The Portuguese in Bengal.

[1] Grierson, *Linguistic Survey*, loc. cit.

[2] The Portuguese language has bequeathed a large number of expressions to the vernacular tongue.

[3] *Travels*, p. 27.

to be found not less than eight or nine thousand families of "Franguis, Portugals". Indeed there is enough evidence to show that Roman Catholic Mission, some of Portuguese origin, had at this time its centre in many parts of Bengal and that it had extended its activity from Balasore and Hugli to Chittagong and Dacca.[1] From the records left by these missionaries it seems that these Catholic missionaries, like their Protestant or Dissenting successors in the next century, did not neglect to mix with the people of Bengal and learn their language. In 1683, Father Marcos Antonio Satucci S.J., the superior of the Mission among these Bengali converts between 1679 and 1684 writes thus:

Roman Catholic and Portuguese Missionaries.

"The fathers have not failed in their duty: they have learned the language well, have composed vocabularies, a grammar, a confessionary and prayers: they have translated the Christian doctrine etc., nothing of which existed till now."[2] Hosten mentions another early allusion to translational work undertaken in Bengal in a letter of Francis Fernandez, dated Siripur, a town of "Bengalla"[3] January 17, 1599, where it is stated that

Translation-work in Bengali.

[1] Father Hosten S. J. of the St. Xavier's College, Calcutta, has been giving interesting accounts of these missions and missionaries in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* (Feb. 1911) and *Bengal Past and Present*.

[2] *O Chronista de Tissuary*, Goa vol. ii, 1867, p. 12, quoted by Hosten in *Bengal Past and Present*, vol. ix, pt. i. This Church still exists. It was twice burnt down and rebuilt. Its records, I am given to understand, have all perished in the fire.

[3] Siripur, we learn from an article (*Portuguese in India*) in *Cal. Rev.* vol. v., 1846, is situated 18 miles south of Sonargang in Dacca and was in the 16th century an extensive Portuguese settlement. It is modern Śrīpur. See Jatindrachandra Ray, *Purākīrti Itihāsa* vol. i, p. 839.

Fernandez composed a small treatise explaining summarily the points of the Christian religion and a small catechism in the form of a dialogue. Father Dominic De Souza translated both these works into the "Bengalla" tongue.[1] In *Lettres Edifiantes et Curieuses*,[2] Father Barbier, as early as 1723, mentions that he prepared a little catechism in Bengali. From these and other references, it is not hazardous to conclude that these Portuguese missionaries, like Carey and Marshman of a later age, though on a modest scale, must have created and left behind them an interesting body of Portuguese-Bengali literature. Of this Portuguese-Bengali literature, little trace remains. Of the few extant writings of a distinctly Portuguese origin, three works, all purported to be written or edited by Manoel da Assumpçaó, Rector of Missio de Santa Nicolao de Tolentino deserve mention.

All these works are supposed to have been written at Nagori, Bhawal, near Dacca. It has already been mentioned that the Portuguese missionaries had a centre at Dacca, where the existence of a church has been mentioned by Père Barbier in the *Lettres Edifiantes*. Tavernier,

[1] *Bengal Past and Present*, July to December, 1910, p. 220, quoting *Extrait de Lettres du P. Nicolas Pimenta*...Anvers, Trognese, 1601. Nicholas Pimenta was a Jesuit missionary of Goa (Visiteur de la Compagnie de Jesus en l'Inde l'an 1598). He sent these two missionaries, Francois Fernandez and Dominic (or Dominique) Sosa, to Bengal, from whose letters to Pimenta we get some account of contemporary Bengal and the Portuguese Missions at Siripur and elsewhere. See Peirre Du Jarric, *Histoire des Indes Orientales* 1610, chap xxix; also xxx to xxxiii. Also see Nicalao Pimenta, *Relatio Historica de rebus in India Orientali*. Anno. MDCI. See Beveridge, *Bakarganj*, p. 29 and other references.

[2] Lettre de Père Barbier, Missionaire de la Compagnie de Jesus, La Mission de Carnate, January 15, 1723, in *Lettres Edifiantes et Curieuses*. Nouvelle Ed. Mémoires de Indes, tome xiii, 1781, p. 278.

about 1620, states that Dacca has a "church of the Augustinians, a very stately pile;"[1] and Hosten, in his papers on Roman Catholic Missions and Missionaries, gives interesting accounts, from original records, of this Missio de S. Nicolao Tolentino, near Bhawal, Dacca.[2]

Portuguese Church at Dacca.

Manoel da Assumpçaó, a native of Evora and an Augustinian friar of the Congregaçaó da India Oriental, was the Rector of this Mission. Of his life and labours, nothing definite is known: but he seems to have been a zealous missionary and composed two books and edited one in Bengali with the object of affording facilities to the missionaries in their Bengali discussions with the "Bramenes and Gentoos."[3]

Manoel da Assumpçaó.

His two works in Bengali.

Of these three works, his earliest composition seems to have been what Father Thirso Lopes, in his note to Hosten's paper,[4] calls an Abridgment of the Mysteries of Faith (Compendio dos misterios da fee, ordenado em lingua Bengalla pelo P. Fr.

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[1] Tavernier's *Travels*, ed. Ball, London, 1889, vol. i., p. 128.

[2] References given *ante*. The other centres of these Augustinian missionaries in Bengal was the Convent of N. Senhora do Rosario of Ugalim (Hugli) in Bengala.

[3] Father Hosten states (*Bengal Past and Present*, vol. ix, pt. i. p. 42) that he has been informed that MSS. of these works are now in the Public Library of Evora.

[4] Quoted in note (4) above. Father Lopes's authorities, in addition to Barbosa Machado and Ossinger, are *Catalogo dos Manuscriptos da Bibliotheca Publica Eborense* ordenado pelo Bibliothecario Joaquim Heliodoro da Cunha Rivara, t. i. p. 345; Silva, *Diccionario Bibliographico Portuguez* t. v. p. 367; Bonifacio Moral, Revista *La Ciudad de Dios*, t. 37, pp. 433-34. Unfortunately these books are not available here.

Manoel da Assumpçaó). A little worm-eaten and partly mutilated copy of this work[1] exists in the Library of the Asiatic Society of Bengal. The running title is: *Crepar Xastrer Orth,bhed* or *Cathecismo da Doutrina Christaá*. The copy in the Asiatic Society is wanting in the title-page; but an interesting certificate of publication in Portuguese is inserted at the beginning from which we learn that it was completed on August 28, 1734. It is dated from a place named Ba( )l,[2] which appears to be Bhawal from a reference at page 2 of the book itself, where Nagori also is mentioned. It might have been, as Father Lopes suggests on the authority of Barbosa Machado,[3] printed at Lisbon by Francisco da Silva (Sylva) in 1743: but unfortunately the loss of the title-page deprives us of the most certain means of corroborating this suggestion.[4]

Crepar Xastrer Orth, bhed or *Cathecismo da Doutrina Christaá*

[1] An account of this work on the basis of this copy was read by me at the Bañgīya Sāhitya Pariṣat on Sept. 24, 1916: the paper is published in the *Patrikā* (vol. 23, p. 179) of the same Society, which see for detailed information.

[2] The Preface, as we have it now, is in places worm-eaten. This is what can be deciphered:

Certifico eu Fr. Manoel da Assumpçaó, Reitor da Mis(si)o de S. Nicolao Tolentino e/ (ac)tor deste compendio; (e)star o( ) compendio tresladado ao pe (da) letra assim o Bengalla como o (Po)-rtuguez: e certifico mais ser es( ) Doutrina que os naturaes mais tendem, e entre todas a mais/ (pu)rificada de erros, em fé de que/ esta Certidaó, e se necessario/ a juro *In Verbo Sacerdotis*. Ba/(va)l. aos. 28 de Agosto de 1734. Fr. Manoel da Assumpçaó.

[3] *Bibliotheca Lusitana Historica Critica e Chronologica*, t. iii, p. 183, col. ii.

[4] Burnell (*A Tentative List of Portuguese Books and Manuscripts* 1880) also gives 1743 and Lisbon as the date and place of publication, (s. v. Manoel da Assumpçaó) his authorities being Barbosa-Machado and Ossinger (*Bibliotheca Augustiniana*, p. 84). Ossinger gives the title as: Cathecismus doctrinae Christianae per modum dialogi.

The book is composed in both Portuguese and Bengali, the former version appearing on the rectos and the latter on the versos of the pages. The whole is in Roman character (Bengali characters having been non-existent), the words being transliterated according to the rules of Portuguese pronunciation. This method of transliteration is not only curious but also noteworthy, being one of the earliest of its kind and having much value in the study of the phonetics of the Bengali language as it existed two centuries ago.[1]

Contents and division of the work.

The book attempts at an exhaustive explanation of the whole Christian doctrine in the form of a dialogue between a *Guru* and *Xixio* (Śiṣya) or Preceptor and Disciple, based on the slight conceit of an imaginary travel to Bhawal. There are interspersed throughout short stories to illustrate moral principles. The contents of the work will be apparent from the following account of the division of the work and headnote of each chapter. The whole is divided into two books, entitled Puthi I and II.

Puthi I. (pp. 2-313). Xo(col..)oner ortho, ebong Prothoqhie prothoqhie buzhan.

Tazel I. (pp. 2-18)—Xidhi cruce orthobhed. (Sign of the Cross).

II. (pp. 19-32sq) Pitar Paron ebong tahan ortho. (Our Father and explanation thereof).

III. (pp. ? *aule* 49-76). This part is wanting in several pages: not known at what page it begins and what its title is. The subject seems to be Hail Mary and Rosary.

[1] Professor Suniti Kumar Chatterji read a paper on this point at a meeting of the Sāhitya Pariṣat, Sep 24, 1916, which is published in the *Patrikā* of the same Society, (1322, vol. 23, p. 197).

IV. (pp. 77-136). Mani xottio Niranzan, Axthar choudo bhed ebong tahandiguer ortho. (The Creed and Articles of Faith and explanation thereof).

V. (pp. 137-244). Dos Agguia, ebong tahandiguer ortho. (Ten Commandments and explanation thereof).

VI. (pp. 245-272). Pans Agguia, ebong tahandiguer ortho. (Five Commandments of the Church and explanation thereof).

VII. (pp. 273-313). Xat Sacramentos, ebong tahandiguer ortho. (Seven Sacraments and explanation thereof).

Puthi II. (pp. 314-380) Poron xaxtro xocol, ar ze uchit zanite xorgue zaibar. (Explanation of the whole doctrine and what a Christian must know).

Tazel I. (pp. 314-356). Axthar bhed bichar xotto coria xiqhibar xiqhaibar upae taribar. (Mysteries of the Faith).

II. (pp. 356-380). Poron Xaxtro nirala. (Prayers of the doctrine).[1]

There are two songs in Puthi II: one at p. 348 headed "Cantiga sobre os mysterios de fe: orthobheder dhormo guit" (Song on the mysteries of Faith), and the other at p. 353 headed "Cantiga Ao Menino Jesus recem nacido: Baloq Jesuzer guit zormo xttane xoia" (Song on infant Jesus newly born).

The book may be interesting as an early explanation of the Roman Catholic doctrine but its chief value, to

[1] The copy, as we have it, is probably incomplete: for p. 380 is not apparently the end of the book and some pages seem to have been lost there-after. The copy also wants the title-page, pp. 33-48, 155-158, 321-336, pp. 371-372 incl. and all after p. 380.

an historian of Bengali literature, lies in its being the first important and sustained Bengali composition by a European author.[1] It gives us the earliest specimen of "Missionary Bengali", as it had existed about a century and a half before Carey, Marshman and their colleagues took the field; and its Bengali is certainly more homely and well-written than the stiff and groping language of Carey's *Dharmapustak*. One is tempted to quote specimens at greater length from this interesting work but space forbids quotation of more than one or two illustrative extracts.[2]

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[1] Father Guérin, who brought out an edition of this work from Chandan-nagar in 1836, states in the Latin preface to that edition that the Portuguese portion only was written by Manoel, while the Bengali portion was the work of some Bengali Christian at Bhawal. But of this there is no evidence. Father Guérin's edition, a copy of which was lent to me by Father L. Wauters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Dharmatala, Calcutta, is interesting, though its Bengali is certainly not so remarkable. It is published in Bengali characters and named কৃপার শাস্ত্রের অর্থবেদ (not ভেদ). It is entirely re-written and remodelled and there is a Latin preface. Nearly two-thirds of the original is expunged as being apocryphal and objectionable while three new dialogues are added, also a list of solar and lunar eclipses calculated for Bengal from 1816 to 1904. The scope and contents of the work will be sufficiently explained by its title: Catéchisme suivi de trois dialogues et de la liste des Eclipses de soleil et de lune calculées pour la Bangale à partir de 1836 jusqu'en 1904 inclusivement. Nouvelle edition, revue et corrigée. কৃপার শাস্ত্রের অর্থবেদ সূর্য্যের আর চন্দ্রের গ্রহণ গণনার সহিত ১৪০ বৎসরের আরম্ভ ১৮৩৬ সাল অবধি সহর চন্দন নগর এবং সমস্ত বাঙ্গালা দেশের নিমিত্তে করিয়াছেন ফাকবত ফ্রানছিস্কাস মরিয়া গেরেন চন্দন নগরের সক্কগ্রাহর পাদরী দ্বিতীয়বার এবং শুদ্ধরূপে শ্রীরামপুরে মুদ্রাঙ্কিত হইল। সন ১৮৩৬ It is interesting to note that Father Guérin himself was an assiduous student of Astronomy and published after his return to England a work on Indian Astronomy in 1847.

[2] For other specimens, see my paper in the *Bangiya Sahitya Parisat Patrika*. (1323, vol. 23, p. 179).

Hail Mary.

Specimens of its language and style.

Pronam Maria | Crepae purnit : | Tomaté Tahaeur assen : | Dhormi to ni | Xocol xtror loquer moidh Dhormo pho | Tomar udore | Jesus. Xidhia Maria | Poromexorer Maia Xadho amora papir caron Eqhone. ar Amardiguer mirtur calé. | Amen Jesus.

The second extract is a story illustrating the efficacy of the Cross in warding off the powers of evil :

Guru: Boro Axchorzio cotha cohila: emot hoe : ar coho : xidhi crux corile Bluter cumoti ni dur zaé ?

Xisia. Hoe : bhuter cumoti dur zae, ebong Bhute o polae. Ehi xonar proman xono.

Eq rahoul meria assilo ; tahare Bhute bazi dia cohiló : tui zodi amar nopher hoite chah ix, ani tore cheq chan dibam : Racolae cohiló ; b'halo, tomar dax hoibo tomi amaré dizen dibá. Bhute cohilo, tabe amar golam hoile : tor uchit nohe dhormo ghare zaite : ebong xidhi Crux ar colachitio coribi na, emot ze core xe amar golam : ehi amar agguia, taha palon coribi ; emot zodi na corix, tomare boutthbotth tarona dibam. Raqhoale cohilo : zaha agguia coro, taha coribo ; zodi emot na cori, tomar ze iccha, xei hoibeg.

Oneq din obhagnia Raqhoale bhuter xaeri coriló : tahar por eq din munixio bol coria reqholaque dhoria dhormo ghore loia guelo. Dhormo ghore eq Padri assilen, xei boro xadhu : tini loq xocolere cohilen : Tomara raqhoaler upore xidhi Crux coró. Emot loq xocole corilo. Toqhon bhute boró cord coria raqhoalerá oneq tarona dite laguilo. Eha dequia Padre raqhoáique dhorilen, bhutere taroná dité mana corilen. Tobe Bhute aro bex cord coria Padriré cohiló ; Ehi munixió amar dax, amar agguia bhanguilo, tahare xaxtti dibar uchit : tahare

cria deo : na : tomare o xaxtti dibam. Padri cohilen : tahare cria dibo na : amare zaha corite parix, taha coró. Tobé bhuté emot cumontro corilo, ze Padrir muqh beca hoilo. Eha deqhia loq xocolé ghore polaia guelo.

Toqhon Padri xidhi crux corilen : ebong muqh xidhá hoilo. Tahar par ar Crux corilén raqhealer upore ; ebong Crux coria Bhuté polaia gueló. Raqheale o calax hoilo, calax hoia tahar xocol oporáá confessor corilo ; Nirmol dhormo o bhoeti rupe loilo, ebong punorbar pailo, ze crepa haraiassilo pap caria.

The second important work of Manoel da Assumpçaó which deserves mention as being perhaps the first grammar and dictionary in the Bengali language is entitled *Vocabulario em Idioma Bengalla e Portuguez*[1] *dividido em duas partes*, published at Lisbon in 1743. This book is not easily available here but it is mentioned in the Catalogue of the British Museum, and Grierson, in his *Linguistic Survey*[2] has given a short account of this notable work. In the first forty pages of the *Vocabolario*, is given a compendium of Bengali grammar ; the rest of the book being divided into two parts, viz., vocabulary, Bengali-Portuguese, pp. 47-306 and Portuguese-Bengali, pp. 307-577. Like the last mentioned work, *Cathechismo*, it is written throughout in Roman character, the words again being spelt according to the rules of Portuguese pronunciation

Vocabolario em Idioma Bengalla e Portuguez, first Bengali grammar and dictionary, 1743

[1] The full title is "Vocabolario em Idioma Bengalla e Portuguez, dividido em duas partes dedicado ao Excellente e Reverendissimo Senhor D. F. Miguel de Tavora Arcebispo d' Evora do Conselho de sua Magestade Fey dellaremita do Padre Fr. Manoel da Assumpçaom Religioso Eremita do Santo Agostinho da Congregaçaõ da India Oriental, Lisboa, 1743. A facsimile of this title page is given in Bāṅgālā sāhityer saṅkṣipta itihāsa by Kedarnath Majumdar, vol. i. 1917. p. 17.

[2] vol. v, pt. i. p. 23.

Besides these two original works, a third is also said to be associated with the name of Manoel. The existence of this book was first made known by Father Thirso Lopes of Valladolid, Spain, in his note contributed to Father Hosten's paper in the *Bengal Past and Present* (vol. ix. pt. i, p. 41). Tho note runs thus : "A Catechism of the Christian Doctrine in the form of a dialogue. It was printed in 8vo. at Lisbon in 1743 by Francisco da Silva. The contents are : A discussion about the Law between a Christian Catholic Roman, and a Bramene or Master of the Gentoos. It shows in the Bengalla tongue the falsity of the Gentoo sect and the infallible truth of our holy Roman Catholic faith, in which alone is the way of salvation and the knowledge of God's true Law. Composed by the son of the King of Busna, Don Antonio,[1] that great Christian Catechist, who converted so many Gentoos, it was translated into Portuguese by Father Frey Manoel da Assumpçaó, a native of the city of Evora, and a member of the Indian Congregation of the Hermits of St. Augustine, actually Rector of the Bengalla Mission, his object being to facilitate to the Missionaries their discussions in the said tongue with the Bramenes and Gentoos. It is a dialogue between the Roman Catholic and the Gentoo Bramene. Written in two columns, Bengala and Portuguese."

Don Antonio's *Catechism* in Bengali, 1743

[1] Hosten, in the *Bengal Past and Present*, loc. cit., gives an account of this semi-legendary figure from *O Chronista de Tissuary*, vol. ii. 1867, pp. 57-58. In the year 1663, a son of the King of Busna was taken prisoner by the Mogós and led to Arracaó, when one of the Fathers, Manoel do Rozario, ransomed him and converted him to Roman Catholic Christianity. After his conversion, he was called Don Antonio de Rozario, after St. Anthony who is said to have appeared to him in a dream.

From the above account, it will be seen that although there is evidence enough to show that the Roman Catholic missionaries at one time were very active in this country, especially in Eastern Bengal, yet not much trace is left of their direct or indirect connexion with the language or literature of this country. Indeed, before Carey, missionaries confining themselves, as they did, exclusively to their proselytising work never seriously took either to educating the people of this country or writing in their language.

Protestant Missionaries before Carey

There was as yet no Protestant Mission to Bengal. The only well-known missionary, before Carey, who visited this country was Kiernander, of whom we shall have occasion to speak later on; but Kiernander, himself ignorant of the language, is in no way connected with our present enquiry. Of Kiernander's associates, however, there was one Bento de Silvestre (*alias* de Souza), who seems to have written a Bengali Catechism and a Book of Common Prayer in Bengali. Bento is said to have been born in Goa about 1728[1] of European parentage and his sojourn in Bengal extended from thirteen[2] to fifteen[3] years spent mostly at Calcutta and Bandel. He was for many years an Augustinian friar but he abjured the Pope before Kiernander on February 7, 1766,[4] whereupon he was appointed Catechist of the Mission at £20 a year and is reputed to have been a

Bento de Silvestre, (1728-1786); Catechism and Book of Common Prayer, in Bengali.

[1] Carey, *Oriental Christian Biography*, Cal. 1850, vol. ii, p. 182.

[2] Hyde, *Parochial Annals of Bengal*, Cal. 1901, p. 155.

[3] Carey, *op. cit.* p. 182.

[4] Carey, *op. cit.*, gives different dates: at p. 182, vol. ii, the date given is July, 1769; while in the same volume at p. 270, the date is 1768. The story of his public abjuration of Roman Catholic faith is given in vol. ii, at p. 182.

zealous preacher in Portuguese and to have translated large portions of the Book of Common Prayer and the Catechism into Bengali, entitled probably *Praśnottara-mālā* and *Prarthanāmālā*. His books are said to have been published by the Society for the promotion of Christian Knowledge and printed in London.[1] Bento knew French, Portuguese, Bengali, and Hindusthani. He probably died in 1786 at the age of fifty eight. The date of publication of his books is unknown. Nagendra Nāth Basu gives 1765 as the date of publication of *Praśnottaramālā*:[2] but this seems to be hardly correct, for Bento must have composed this work, after he was appointed Catechist, *i.e.* after 1766 (according to Hyde) or after 1768-69 (according to Carey).

So far as we can trace, these are the earliest names on the list of foreign benefactors to the Vernacular Literature of Bengal. But we do not find any serious and definitely important achievement in the field, until we come to the illustrious name of Nathaniel Brassey Halhed.[3]

Since 1772 the East India Company had actually taken upon itself the entire responsibilities of administration; and this made it almost a necessity for its civil servants to study the vernacular of the country which they had now begun to govern.[4] About this time, Halhed,

[1] For further details, see my paper in the *Prabāsī* (Dacca), Māgh, 1322 B.S. References to Bento will be found in Carne, *Lives of Eminent Missionaries* (London, 1833) in the article on Kiernander; also see *John Zachariah Kiernander* (Bap. Miss. Press, Cal. 1877).

[2] *Encyclop.* Art. Bengali Language and Literature.

[3] The name is not Nathaniel Prassy Halhed, as given in Dinesh Chandra Sen, *History of Bengali Language and Literature*, Calcutta, 1911, pp. 15, 848, 849.

[4] See the elaborate arguments set forth in the Preface (p. i-xxv) to Halhed's *Grammar*, in favour of the study of the Bengali language by Europeans. See also Introduction to Forster's *Vocabulary*.

an able scholar, who had already achieved some literary reputation and had been a friend of Sheridan's,[1] came out to Bengal as a civilian and applied himself with great assiduity to the study of the Bengali language. He is said to have attained so much proficiency in the language, both in its colloquial and literary aspects, that he had been known to disguise himself in native dress and pass as a Bengali in an assembly of Bengalis.[2]

Nathaniel Brassey Halhed (1751-1830).

Nathaniel Brassey Halhed was born on May 25, 1751, at Westminster. His father, William Halhed, descended from an old Oxfordshire family, was for eighteen years a Director of the Bank of England. Young Halhed was

[1] "We also learn that Nathaniel Brassey Halhed Esq. either himself or in collaboration with Richard Brinsley Sheridan translated the Epistles of Aristaenetus into English metre in 1771." (*Gentleman's Magazine*, lxxxii. pt. 2. 1812. p. 132.)

[2] Rev. James Long, *A Descriptive Catalogue of Bengali Books*, 1855, p. 2; *Calcutta Review*, 1850, p. 134; *Second Old Days of Hon'ble Company*, vol. i. p. 235. But this story of Halhed's proficiency in Bengali seems to be doubtful: in the *Friend of India* (Aug. 1838) we read this, not of him, but of his nephew Nathaniel John Halhed (1787-1838), a Judge of the Decani 'Alike John Halhed, we are informed, had seen command over the language that he is said to have joined a *pal*-party at Burdwan and passed there for a Bengali.' See also R. G. Sanyal, *Reminiscences and Anecdotes*, vol. ii, p. 9. John Halhed, in Sanyal's work as well as in *Old Bengal Inmates* (p. 204) is said to have been a son of the grammarian Halhed, which is clearly a mistake for N. B. Halhed the grammarian who married (before 1784) Helena Rumbold, a daughter of the Dutch Governor of Chinsura, died without any issue. See Impey's *Memoirs of his own time*, p. 303 footnote. Also *Dictionary of National Biography*, Art. Halhed. That Halhed possessed a high degree of proficiency in the language and brought the scientific study of Bengali within easy reach is undoubted and justifies Colebrooke's high eulogy (*Asiatic Researches*, vol. vii. 1799. p. 234); and to this is due the attribution of all sorts of apocryphal stories to his credit. For Nathaniel John Halhed, see Ramphumlar Dass, *General Register of Hon. E. I. Co.'s Civil Servants in the Bengal Establishment*. Cal. 1844, p. 155.

educated at Harrow under Sumner, and there began his friendship with Richard Brinsley Sheridan, in conjunction with whom he subsequently produced a verse-translation of Aristaenetus.[1] In 1768 he passed on to Christ Church, Oxford[2] where he made the acquaintance of William (afterwards Sir William) Jones, also a Harrow boy, who led him to study some of the Oriental languages. Having been jilted by Miss Linley in favour of Sheridan, he left England, having obtained a writership in the E. I. Company's Service. In India he attracted the notice of Warren Hastings at whose suggestion he translated what is known as the Gentoo Code between 1774-6 (First Edition 1776; Second Edition 1777). He returned to England in 1785 and the subsequent history of his life has little attraction for us. He was returned to Parliament in 1791 for Symington, Hampshire, which he represented till 1795. From this time he became associated with the teachings of the fanatic prophet Richard Brothers, attracted possibly by their resemblance to oriental mysticism with which he was familiar. In 1809 he obtained an appointment in the East India House. He died in London, February 18, 1830, and was buried at Petersham, Surrey.[3]

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[1] See *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1812, pt. 2, p. 132; also *Literary Anecdotes of the 18th Century*, p. 124-5.

[2] *Alumni Oxonienses*; Matric. July 13, 1768, aged 17.

[3] For further particulars, see *Asiatic Journal*, 1836, pp. 165-71; *The World*, June 18, 1790; Teignmouth, *Memoirs of Sir William Jones*, 1804, pp. 73, 431 and other references; *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1830 (pt. i, pp. 471-3), 1808 (pt. ii, p. 922), 1812 (p. 132); *Annual Register*; Moore, *Memoirs of Sheridan*, 1825; *Ingey's Memoirs* by his son, pp. 355 et seq; Allibone, *Dictionary of British and American Authors*, 1895, vol. i; *Biographical Dictionary of Living Authors*, 1816; *Dictionary of National Biography* (in two last mentioned works a list of Halhed's works is given); Nichols, *Literary Anecdotes*, vol. ii, p. 431.

In 1778[1] Halhed compiled and printed in English a *Grammar of the Bengal Language*,[2] one of the earliest and for some time the best introduction to the scientific study of the language.[3] At this time we had no printing press possessing a set of Bengali punches, and the art of printing unknown, we had hardly any printed literature before this date. The history of the printing of this work, which was done in a press at "Hoogly in Bengal" marks an era in the history of Bengali literature. It is chiefly to the exertions of the ever memorable Caxton of Bengal, Charles (afterwards Sir Charles) Wilkins, a Bengal Civilian and oriental scholar, that we are indebted for the beautiful types which he had himself prepared and in which art he had instructed the Bengali mechanics, thus introducing, as he did, the art of printing into this country. It is impossible to exaggerate the services thus rendered by this philanthropic Englishman, not only to the cause of vernacular literature but also to the general culture of

Grammar of the Bengal Language, 1778.

History of its printing by Sir Charles Wilkins.

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[1] The date is not 1784 as given in the *Bengal Obituary*, p. 337 Smith, *Life of Carey*, repeats the mistake (New Ed. 1912, p. 159).

[2] *A Grammar of the Bengal Language* by Nathaniel Brassey Halhed. Printed at Hoogly in Bengal. MDCCLXXVIII (1778). The book is very scarce but copies may be found in the Calcutta Imperial Library, Baṅgīya Sāhitya Pariṣat Library and Śrīrāmpur College Library.

[3] The first Bengali grammar and dictionary, so far as it can be traced, was, as we have seen, in Portuguese. A curious request appears in the *Calcutta Gazette*, April 23, 1789, beseeching "any gentleman" to undertake for public benefit the composition of a Bengali Grammar (Seton-Karr, *Selections from Cal. Gazette*, ii. 497). It seems that by that time Halhed's *Grammar* had already become scarce and the necessity for a fresh grammar was keenly felt.

the people, for it is undoubted that without this useful art of printing the general education of the people under modern conditions is almost impossible.

Sir Charles Wilkins. 1750-1836.

Charles Wilkins was born at Frome, Somerset, in 1750, son of Walter Wilkins of that town. He came to Bengal in 1770 in the service of the East India Company as a writer and became superintendent of the Company's Factories at Maldah. "About 1778", he writes, his "curiosity was excited by the example of his friend Halhed" to commence the study of Sanscrit and Persian ; the vernaculars he had previously studied. He left India for health in 1786 and re-entered the service of the Company in 1800 as Librarian and Custodian of Oriental Manuscripts, taken at the Fall of Seringapatam and elsewhere. He was also attached to the Haileybury College from its foundation in 1805. While in India he co-operated with Sir William Jones in the foundation of the Asiatic Society of Bengal and was a valuable contributor to the earlier volumes of the *Asiatic Researches*. He was an F. R. S. (1788) ; a D. C. L. of Oxford (1805) ; an Associate of the Institute of France ; and the Royal Society of Literature awarded him its medal as "princeps litteraturae Sanscritae". He was knighted in 1833. He died in London, May 13, 1836, and was interred at the Chapel in Portland town.[1]

[1] For a list of his oriental works and other particulars, see *Asiatic Journal*, 1836, pp. 165 71 ; *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1836 (pt. ii. pp 67-8), 1808 (pt. ii, p. 922) ; *Annual Register* for 1836 ; *Alumni Oxonienses*, 1888 ; *Biographical Dictionary of Living Authors*, 1816 ; *Dictionary of National Biography* ; *Centenary Volumes of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* ; *Letters in the Journal of American Oriental Society*, 1880, vol x ; Preface to Sir William Jones's *Cakuntala* and to Wilkins' *Sanscrit Grammar* ; *Notice of the Life of H. T. Colebrooke*, by his son, p. 7 ; Wilkins' translation of the *Bhagabadgītā* (1785) with an introductory

To such a great scholar, Bengal owes the establishment of the first vernacular printing press.[1]

Extract from the Preface to Halhed's *Grammar* indicating the difficulties of printing.

The Preface to Halhed's *Grammar* sets forth some interesting details as to the difficulties which Wilkins had to overcome and as to how with patient preseverance he ultimately succeeded. "Public curiosity" it says "must be strongly excited by the beautiful characters which are displayed in the following work; and although my attempt may be deemed incomplete or unworthy of notice, the book itself will always bear an intrinsic value from its containing as extraordinary an instance of machanic abilities as has perhaps ever appeared. That the Bengal letter is very difficult to be imitated in steel will be readily allowed by any person who shall examine the intricacies of the strokes, the unequal length and size of the characters, and the variety of their positions and combinations. It was no easy task to procure a writer accurate enough to prepare an alphabet of similar and proportionate body throughout, and with that symmetrical exactness which is necessary to the regularity and neatness of a fount. Mr. Bolts (who is supposed to be well-versed in this language) attempted to fabricate a set of types for it with the assistance of the ablest artist in London. But as he has egregiously failed in executing even the easiest part, or the primary alphabet, of which he has published a specimen, there is no reason to suppose that

letter by Warren Hastings. See *Cal. Rev.* vol. iii. 234; Seton-Karr, *Selections from the Calcutta Gazettes*, i. 130.

[1] About the first introduction of printing in the East, see Dr. Garnett's paper read before the Second International Library Conference (*Transactions and Proceedings of the Second International Library Conference held in London, 1897*. London, 1898.)

his project, when completed, would have advanced beyond the normal state of imperfection to which new inventions are constantly exposed. The advice and even the solicitation of the Governor-General prevailed upon upon Mr. Wilkins, a gentleman who has been some years in the India Company's Civil Service in Bengal, to undertake a set of Bengali types. He did and his success has exceeded every expectation. In a country so remote from European artists, he has been obliged to charge himself with all the various occupations of the Metallurgist, the Engraver, the Founder, and the Printer. To the merit of invention he was compelled to add the application of personal labour. With a rapidity unknown in Europe, he surmounted all obstacles which necessarily clog the first rudiments of a difficult art as well as the disadvantages of solitary experiment; and has thus singly on the first effort exhibited his work in a state of perfection which in every part of the world has appeared to require the united improvements of different projectors and the gradual polish of successive ages."[1]

The significance and importance of Wilkins' work to Bengali literature.

It must be remembered that these labours of Wilkins did not end merely in the temporary and isolated benefit of printing a grammar but had far deeper and more wide-reaching effects for Wilkins had taken care that his work should produce lasting results. He had taught the art with great care to his Bengali assistant, one Pañchānan, a blacksmith by caste,

[1] Preface pp. xxiii-iv. See also the letter of George Perry to Mr. Nicols, the printer, dated Calcutta, October 1 1783, quoted in the *Biographical Dictionary of Living Authors*, 1816, p. 385. This press cannot be traced but Marshman (*History of Serampore Mission*, vol. i) says that it was set up by one Mr. Andrews, a bookseller.

whom later on providence brought to Śrīrāmpur in search of work, just at the time when Carey and his colleagues were in despair for a fount of Sanscrit and vernacular types. Panchānan and his associates, to whom he had communicated his art, succeeded in course of time in domesticating it in Bengal.[1]

Halhed's *Grammar*; its interest and value.

Halhed's *Grammar* possesses a peculiar interest for us as being one of the earliest efforts to study the language in a scientific way. Halhed himself is perfectly conscious of the difficulties of such a study and says in the Preface (p. xix) "The path which I have attempted to clear was never before trodden. It was necessary that I should make my own choice of the course to be pursued and of the landmarks to be set up for the guidance of future travellers".[2] But barring this antiquarian interest, it can hardly be expected to possess any other value to us. It was obviously written for the benefit of the Europeans who wanted to study the foreign vernacular;[3] and as such it was bound to be written entirely from their standpoint. Of course it is well to study the spirit with which foreigners

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[1] See *Memoir Relative to the the Translation of the Sacred Scriptures into the Languages of the East at Serampore* by J. Marshman, 1816; also Marshman, *Hist. of Serampore Mission*, vol. i

[2] The curious motto prefixed to the book says:

ইন্দ্রাদয়োঽপি যস্যান্তং ন যযুঃ শব্দবারিধেঃ;
প্রক্রিয়াস্তত্র কৃৎস্নস্য পরো বক্তুং ন কঃ ক্ষমঃ ॥

Carey acknowledges to have derived much help in writing his *Bengali Grammar* (1801) from Halhed's work; see Preface to Carey's *Grammar* (1st Ed. 1801); see also E. Carey, *Life of Carey*, p. 247.

[3] On the title-page we read:

বোধপ্রকাশং শব্দশাস্ত্রং বিদেশিনামুপকারার্থং
খ্রিষ্টেতর হালেদেন কৃতং ।

approach our language, but as a pioneer work and as one intended for mere beginners, uninitiated into the language, its value is greatly diminished. Even a cursory glance at the contents will show that the arrangement and division of the subject-matter is made chiefly on the plan of English grammars, beginning with the Elements (Chap. I), proceeding with Substantives (Chap. II), Pronouns (Chap. III), Verbs (Chap. IV), Words denoting Attributes and Relations (Chap. V), Numerals (Chap. VI) and ending with a brief discussion of Syntax (Chap. VII), Orthography and Versification (Chap. VIII).[1] The rules laid down are more or less general and elementary; but some attempt is made to arrive at broad underlying principles, although in a somewhat tentative and impressionist fashion. The arrangement is as comprehensive as possible but the author is scrupulously minute in his insertion of examples to every rule and is rather prolix in his observations upon the general grammar. One merit of the book consists, however, in the fact that Halhed was fully alive to the intimate relation of Bengali to Sanscrit, "of which language" he says "I have thought necessary to include within my design such of the grammatical principles as might throw a direct or even a collateral light on those of the Bengalese.....I wished to obviate the recurrence of such erroneous opinions as may have been formed by the few Europeans who have hitherto studied the Bengalese; none

[1] But it is curious to note that ক্ষ is included in the list of consonants. The orthography seems to have been yet unsettled and the border-line between colloquial and literary language seems to have been crossed very often, possibly owing to the difficulty of a foreigner, however studious, in entering into the genius of an alien tongue.

of them have traced its connections with Sanscrit, and therefore I conclude their systems imperfect" (Preface, p. xix et seq.). Of course adherence to Sanscrit is indispensable in writing a Bengali grammar but Halhed's work more or less presents Bengali as derived exclusively from its parent, Sanscrit. He remarks at some length on the exceedingly corrupt state of the dialect of the time[1] and says that "a grammar of the pure Bengal dialect cannot be expected to convey a thorough idea of the modern jargon of the kingdom. The many political revolutions it has sustained have greatly impaired the simplicity of the language, and a long communication with the men of different religions, countries and manners, has rendered foreign words in some degree familiar to a Bengal ear. The Mahometans have for the most part introduced such terms as relate to the functions of their own religion or the exercise of their own laws and government; the Portugese have supplied them with appellation of some European arts and inventions; and in the environs of such foreign colony the idioms of the native Bengalese is tinctured with that of the strangers who have settled there. Upon the same principle since the influence of the British nation has superseded that of its former conquerors, many terms of British derivation have been naturalised into the Bengal vocabulary."

It cannot be doubted for a moment that the book holds a high place as one of the earliest of a series of

[1] There will be found a curious appendix to this book containing a petition replete with foreign expressions, showing how far modern Bengali had been forced to debase the purity of its dialect by the necessity of addressing itself to the Mohammedan rulers. In the Preface to his *Vocabulary*, Forster similarly speaks of studiously avoiding "Persian or Arabick pedantisms."

attempts, valuable even to the present day, to study the vernacular scientifically, but if we leave aside this antiquarian and scientific interest, it can hardly be expected to come within literature proper. To the historian of literature, however, it is valuable, as most of these pioneer works are, for affording one of the earliest links in the revived study of the language itself.

Other specimens of early printing.

Impey Code in Bengali by J. Duncan.

Cornwallis Code in Bengali by H. P. Forster.

We pass over other specimens of early printing which the exigencies of administrative changes and the establishment of the Supreme Court (1774) brought into existence. Among these are to be found the Impey Code in Bengali,[1] which was translated by Jonathan Duncan, afterwards Governor of Bombay, and printed at the "Company's Press" in 1785, and the famous Cornwallis Code of 1793 [2] which was translated by H. P. Forster, "a merchant on the Bengal Establishment", of whom we shall have occasion to speak hereafter. It was likewise printed at the Government Press but from an improved fount. [3] We read of two other early publications in the Catalogue of Bengali Works in the British Museum [4]

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[1] *Regulations for the Administration of Justice, in the Court of the Dewanee Adaulat, passed in Council, the 5th July, 1785, with a Bengali Translation* by Jonathan Duncan, Calcutta, 1785. pp. 215, 31.

[2] The title-page says: শ্রীযুক্ত নবাব গবর্ণর জেনারল বাহাদুরের হুজুর কৌন্সেলের ১৭৯৩ সালের ৪৮ আইন। তাহা নবাব গবর্ণর জেনারল বাহাদুরের হুজুর কৌন্সেলের আজ্ঞাতে মুদ্রাঙ্কিত হইল। ১৭৯৩। Second Edition in 1826.

[3] "It is to this fount that Carey alludes, and it continued to be the standard of typography till it was superseded by the smaller and neater fount at Serampore" Marshman, *Life and Times of Carey, Marshman and Ward*. 1859, vol. i., p. 71.

[4] Blumhardt, *Catalogue of Bengali Books in the British Museum*, p. 8.

viz., (*a*) Bengal translation (by N. B. Edmonstone) of Regulations for the administration of Justice in the Fouzdary Criminal Courts in Bengal, Behar and Orissa, passed by the Governor-General in Council on the 3rd December, 1790, Calcutta, 1791; (*b*) Bengal Translation (by N. B. Edmonstone) of the Regulations for the guidance of the Magistrates passed by the Governor-General in Council in the Revenue Department on the 18th May, 1792, with supplementary enactments, Calcutta, 1792.

Regulations, etc., by N. B. Edmonstone.

The next important work in our survey is Forster's *Vocabulary*, the first dictionary of the language, and it will detain us for a moment, as it was indeed a work of merit and for a long time considered to be the most authoritative and standard publication on the subject.[1]

Forster's *Vocabulary*, the first Bengali-English dictionary, 1799-1802.

Henry Pitts Forster, born[2] in 1761, of whose early life little seems to be known, entered Bengal Service of the Company on August 7, 1783, and rose to be the Collector of Tipperah in 1793 and Registrar of the Dewānī ʿĀdālat of the 24 Parganas in 1794. In 1803-04, he was employed at the Calcutta Mint of which he rose to be the

Henry Pitts Forster. 1761-1815.

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[1] Carey based his famous *Dictionary of the Bengali Language* (1815-1825), the source of all dictionaries of later times, on Forster's *Vocabulary*. The first Bengali dictionary is, of course, Manoel da Assumpçaõ's *Vocabulario* in Portuguese, which has been already mentioned.

[2] *The Dictionary of National Biography* gives the hypothetical date of 1766 with a query. But it appears from the obituary notices in the *Calcutta Government Gazette* of 1815 (Sep. 14) and in the *Calcutta Monthly Journal* for September, 1815 (p. 285) that Forster was aged 54 at the time of his death. In that case, his birth-date would be 1761, which is here adopted.

Master.[1] He died in India on September 10, 1815.[2] Besides *Vocabulary*, Forster also wrote an *Essay on the Principles of Sanscrit Grammar* (1810).

Vocabulary; its scope and value.

The first part of the *Vocabulary* was published in 1799: while the second part appeared in 1802.[3] The full title of the work, which will sufficiently explain its scope, is: "*A Vocabulary in two parts, English and Bengalee and vice versa* by H. P.

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[1] It appears from Dodwell and Miles, *Bengal Civil Servants*, 1839, (pp. 182-8: supp. list, pp. 600-1) that from 1798 to 1803 as well as 1812 to 1815, Forster was out of employ. See also *Bengal Almanac and Annual Directory*, 1815, p. 9.

[2] He died probably in Calcutta, but his burial place cannot be traced. No mention either in the *Bengal Obituary* or in De Rozario's *Monumental Register*. For further particulars of his life, see references quoted above; also *Dictionary of National Biography*; Allibone, *Dictionary of British and American Authors*. Marshman, (*Life and Times of Carey etc.*, 1859, vol. i., p. 71) spells the name as Foster, which form is not correct.

[3] The date of publication given in Rām-gati Nyāyaratna, *Baṅgabhāṣā O Sāhitya Biṣayak Prastāb*, 3rd Ed., p. 192, is 1801 which is clearly erroneous. The date given in Dinesh Chandra Sen, *History of Bengali Language and Literature*, 1911, p. 868 (where the book is described as "Bengali Dictionary by Forster, a Civilian and Sanskrit Scholar") is 1719 which seems to be an obvious mistake or misprint for 1799. The account given in this latter work is mainly based on Rev. J. Long's *Catalogue*, but Long's book was compiled not till 1855 and contains more than one inaccurate statement. See also the notification in the *Calcutta Gazette*, dated August 26, 1802, in which "Mr. Forster has the pleasure to acquaint the subscribers of his Bengalee Vocabulary, that the second part is entirely printed off, and will be ready for delivery all in the present month of August and as he has more than doubled the size of the work beyond what he engaged, he hopes this will be admitted as a sufficient excuse for the delay in the publication." (Seton-Karr, *Selections from Calcutta Gazette*, vol. iii, p. 561). It is clear that the work was published in two instalments in 1799 and 1802.

Forster, Senior Merchant on the Bengal Establishment."[1] It is evident from the lengthy preface to this work as well as to that of Halhed that these early works were undertaken not on literary but also on political grounds. Bengali at this time, officially as well as popularly, was an unrecognised vernacular, and Forster rightly insists upon the absurdity and inconvenience of continuing the use of Persian in courts of law (see Preface to *Vocabulary*). It was thus due to the efforts of Halhed and Forster, seconded among Europeans by Carey and the Śrīrāmpur missionaries and among Bengalis by Rām Mohan Rāy and his friends, that Bengali not only became the official language of the Presidency but it now ranks as one of the most prolific literary languages of India. One of the greatest difficulty, however, under which all compilers in this period had to labour and to which Forster himself, as his preface shows, was fully alive, was the exceedingly corrupt state of the language in its current 'dialect' form. There was no standard literature, or if there had been one it was long forgotten or was not so widely known as to ensure fixity of forms and expressions.[2] This corruption,

[1] Printed at Calcutta from the Press of Ferris and Co., 1799. Dedicated to Thomas Graham Esqr., dated December 15, 1799. A copy of this work will be conveniently found in the Calcutta Imperial Library.

[2] As the various quotations by way of illustration in Halhed's *Grammar* shows, he was not aware of the existence of more than half a dozen old Bengali works. He takes his passages mostly from *Mahābhārat* (from which he gives a lengthy quotation at pp. 37-42), *Rāmāyṇ* and the various works of Bhārat-chandra, still in vogue, especially his *Bidyāsundar*. Printing there was hardly any and books mostly in manuscripts were not easily procurable. It is also notable that Halhed confines himself exclusively to examples taken from Poetry and there is not a single prose quotation in his works. "I might observe" he writes, "that Bengali is at present in the same state with Greece before the time of Thucydides when Poetry was the

however, was confined principally to revenue and judicial terms, and the more common and daily shifting colloquial expressions. But the greatest difficulty was felt in orthography which was in a hopelessly chaotic state, in these ante-printing days. "There never having been" says Forster, "a native Bengalee grammarian nor indeed any author of note .....who might be considered as a standard, the orthography has consequently never been fixed; and being current over an extensive country and among an illiterate people, almost every word has been and continues in one district or other to be variously spelt, and not infrequently so disguised as to render it difficult to recognise it, when met in its genuine form in Songskrit. In such cases, I have not scrupled to adopt Songskrit orthography, unless I found the majority of the people whom I consulted, concur in any particular vitiated mode of spelling it." In spite of these difficulties, however, Forster succeeded in compiling one of the most valuable and painstaking lexicon of the language ever published, and the eulogy of Marshman that Forster was the "most eminent Bengali scholar till the appearance of Dr. Carey"[1] is fully justified.

The advent of the missionaries.

The year in which Forster's *Vocabulary* was published saw another memorable but at that time an apparently unimportant event—the landing of a band of missionaries on the banks of the Ganges and the starting of a mission at Śrīrāmpur. A year later, the Fort William College

only style to which authors applied themselves and studied prose was utterly unknown". The biographer of Dr. Carey relates how (Smith, *op. cit.* p. 202) when Carey visited Nadīyā, not many years ago the illustrious centre of Bengali literature, "he could not discover more than 40 separate works. all in manuscripts, as the whole literature of 30,000,000 of people up to that time".

[1] Marshman, *Life and Times of Carey etc.*, vol. i., p. 71.

was established at Calcutta for imparting knowledge of the vernaculars to young civilians. With this Mission as its centre and the Fort William College as its public forum, Bengali language entered upon a new phase of development, hitherto undreamt of. Forster was, no doubt, followed by a band of earnest civilian workers, of whom the names of J. F. Ellerton[1] and Sir Graves C. Haughton are the most well-known, yet with the missionaries in the field, who, for years to come, had made education of the people and cultivation of the vernacular their own peculiar province, earlier work was eclipsed, and a fresh impetus was given to the vernacular literature. The experimental stage was not yet over, but what was desultory, spasmodic, and slipshod became regular, unbroken, and systematic: and for several years till the foundation of the Hindu College and the emergence of a new band of writers, the history of Bengali literature is closely bound up with the labours of the missionaries and school-masters, and especially of the brotherhood at Śrīrāmpur, associated with the names of Carey, Marshman and Ward whose devotion, earnestness and philanthropic purpose cannot be too highly spoken of.

Śrīrāmpur Mission.

[1] Ellerton wrote his works before 1800 and, therefore, strictly speaking belongs to this chapter. But Ellerton's Bible-translations were not published until probably 1819: so an account of him will be found in the next chapter under the Bible-translations of the Śrīrāmpur missionaries.

CHAPTER IV

William Carey and Śrīrāmpur Mission.

Śrīrāmpur Mission.

Of the missionary movements which gave an early impetus to Bengali language and literature, the foremost place has been given to the fraternity of the famous Śrīrāmpur Mission, which was started by Carey, Marshman and Ward but of which the moving spirit was William Carey.

William Carey (1761-1834)

William Carey, the son of a weaver and himself a village shoe-maker till the age of twenty-eight, was born on August 17, 1761 in the village of Paulesbury, situated in the very midland of England, in the heart of the district which not only produced Shakespeare and cherished Cowper but which also fostered Wyclif and Hooker, Fox and Bunyan. But village-life in those days was far from being elysian and the destiny of the cottager, with poverty and sore toil staring him in the face, was cheerless enough. Buried in an obscure village, the eldest of a family of five children, young Carey seemed to be born to such a lot, the English labourer's lot of five shillings a week and the poorhouse in sickness and old age. At the age of sixteen he was an apprentice to the shoe-maker's trade—a trade of which however he was never ashamed[1]

Birth and early life.

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[1] It would be silly in me to pretend to recollect all the shoes I made. I was accounted a very good workman...(Letter to Ryland) There is no inconsistency between this and his famous retort to the general officer who inquired of one of the aides-de-camp, when dining with the Marquis of Hastings, whether Dr. Carey had not once

and which linked him to the earliest missionaries of Alexandria, of Asia Minor, and of Gaul, some of whom were shoe-makers, and to a succession of scholars and divines, poets and critics, reformers and philanthropists who had used the shoe-maker's life to become illustrious. The picture of young Carey, keeping school by day, preaching on Sundays, and cobling or making shoes by night, would remind one very forcibly of Carlyle's picture of George Fox in his *Sartor Resartus*. But all this time, in poverty that would have very soon crushed the spirit of an ordinary man, he went on with his studies, although books were rare in those days and not easy to be begged or borrowed by a country-boy. It is remarkable that his taste inclined him to books of travel, adventure, history, and natural science to the exculsion of novels, plays, and books on religious subjects. The religious earnestness which marked his later life had not yet dawned, and he had been hitherto a stranger to the gospel of Christ. A remarkable change took place in his life about his eighteenth year. He joined the small church which was formed at Hackleton and afterwards the Baptist congregation at Moulton where he became a pastor. His mind was at this time occupied in acquiring the learned languages and almost every branch of useful knowledge.

His missionary ardour.

It was about this time that his great thought about the practicability and importance of a mission abroad took definite shape in his mind. His extensive study of geography and books of travel convinced him painfully of the fact that a very small portion of the human race had yet possessed any knowledge of Christ and his

been a shoe-maker. "No, Sir, only a cobler!" (quoted in Dr Culross's *William Carey*).

religion. In order to impress his brethern with his new idea, he wrote and published "*An Enquiry into the Obligations of the Christians for the Conversion of the Heathens in which the Religious State of Different Nations of the World, the Success of Former Undertakings, are considered by William Carey.*" (1792). This was the birth of England's foreign Mission in Bengal[1] for Carey would not remain idle until his project had been put into practice. At last, at a meeting of the Northamptonshire Association of Baptist Churches held at Kettering (Northampton) on the October 2, 1792, a Baptist Missionary Society was started on a humble scale for propagating the gospel. Carey set out for India on June 13, 1793. At first he had desired to go to Tahiti or West America. At this time, however, he met John Thomas, a medical evangelist, who had made two voyages to India and had some experience of Bengal.[2] It was Thomas who directed Carey to Bengal.

Sets out for India, 1793.

It must not be supposed, however, that the missionary spirit was unknown in Carey's time or that India was never before visited by the missionary activity. On the contrary, many great names and great though mistaken movements will occur to the memory of every reader of Church history[3]. Not to go far back to the missionary

Missions in India: Carey's predecessors.

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[1] Carey, however, was not the first English missionary to Bengal: this was one Mr. Clarke (see Hyde, *Parochial Annals of Bengal*, p.213.)

[2] See C. B. Lewis, *Life of John Thomas* (1873). Also Smith, *op. cit.* p. 41.

[3] For details about the history of Christian Missions of which literature is vast, the following books may be conveniently consulted; Brown's *History of Missions*, Kaye's *History of Christianity in India*, Marshall's *Christian Missions*, Hough's *Christianity in India*, Sherring's *Protestant Mission in India*, and Marshman's *History of the Serampore Mission*.

zeal of Francis Xavier or of the Moravian brotherhood in the East, we find, for the greater part of the 18th century (1707 to 1798), the Coast-Mission (as it was called) carrying on its missionary work in South India with Tranquebar as its centre. At one time it was a very powerful movement carried on by the Lutherans whom, from Zeingenbalg to Schwartz, Dr. Francke had trained at Halle and Frederick IV of Denmark had send forth to its India Company's settlement in the South: but when Carey landed, the Coast Mission, partly on account of the wars between the English and the French, was almost in a state of inanition. To Bengal there was, we have seen, Roman Catholic Mission but as yet no Protestant Mission from England. The only well-known missionary who came to Bengal before Carey, was Kiernandar the Swede,[1] the "Mammon" of Hicky's *Gazette*, whom Clive in 1758 had brought to Calcutta where

John Zachariah Kiernander, 1758 (d. 1799).

James Long's *Handbook to Bengal Missions* will also be found useful, with reference to the general educational activity of the missionaries. Duff's *India and Indian Missions* and his articles in the earlier volumes of the *Calcutta Review* may also be consulted. On the Missions in the South, literature in vast. One may, however, consult with advantage, *Lettres Edifiantes et Curieuses écrites de Missions Etrangères*, 26 vols. 1780-83, vols. x-xv specially refer to India; Lacroze, *Histoire du Christianisme des Indes*, 2 vols. 1758; Bertrand, *La Mission du Maduré* 4 vols. 1847; Coleridge, *Life and Letters of St. Francis Xavier*. For a fuller bibliography on this subject, see A. C. Burnell, *A Tentative List of Books and Mss. relating to the History of the Portuguese in India*, Mangalore, 1880.

[1] See *Cal. Rev.* 1847. vol. viii, pp. 124-184. Also Marshman, *History of Serampore Mission*, vol. i, p. 20, et seq. Carey calls Kiernander a German (E. Carey, *Memoirs of Carey*, p. 449.). See Marshall's *Christian Missions*, vol. i, p. 278. For Kiernander, see *Bengal Obituary*, p. 34 et seq: Carne, *Lives of Eminent Missionaries*; *Asiatic Journal*, vol. xv, 1834; W. H. Carey, *Oriental Christian Biography*, pp. 193 et seq; Hyde,

he thenceforth lived, meeting young Carey subsequently at Bandel at the great age of eighty-four. But Kiernander could not wield any influence on the masses[1] and had no literary pretensions whatever; for although he started a native school and built a Church at his own cost, he was, in the first place, rather a missionary to the Portuguese and their descendants who were nominal Christians of the lowest Romanist type: and, in the next place, Kiernander could never converse in Bengali or Hindusthani and never cared to mix freely with the people of the country. Practically his work had made only the slightest impression and it was no wonder therefore that Carey could find no trace of his work among the people even six years after his death.

The character of the clergy and the opposition of the East India Company to Christian Missions.

The condition of the clergy at this time, however, and their public and private morals did not in any way make them attractive to or influential with the people of this country. It is well-known that the East India Company not only adopted a policy of perfect neutrality towards the religions of India and never attempted to preach their religion themselves but they also threw every possible obstacle in the way of the missionaries who wanted to settle in their territories. The ostensible ground for this aggressive spirit of discouragement was political but the real reasons are thus given by a writer in the *Calcutta*

Parochial Annals of Bengal: *The Monumental Register* by M. DeRozario (1815) p. 109-113; Busteed, *Echoes from Old Calcutta*, 1908; Cotton, *Calcutta Past and Present*; *John Zachariah Kiernander* (a pamphlet), Cal. Bap. Miss. Press, 1877, etc.

[1] Of Kiernander's clerical convert, Bento de Silvestre *alias* de Souza and his contribution to Bengali, mention has already been made at p. 77–78.

Review (1859): "The Missionary was the interloper *par excellence*, and the hate of a camel for a horse, of a snake for a mongoose, was feeble when compared with the hate of the Anglo-Indian for the Interloper. Partly from his training, partly from the first circumstances of the conquest, the Anglo-Indian official regarded India as his property, his peculium. An interloper was therefore in his eyes little better than a thief, a man who undersold him, interrupted his profits, and impaired his exclusive authority over the population. With the instinct which comes of self-defence he saw that the Missionary was the most dangerous of interlopers." Neither the character of the early founders of the British Empire as a body nor that of the clergy before the Śrīrāmpur mission was such as to inspire respect for their religion; and of the clergy as a class, the Governor-General officially wrote to the Court of Directors as late as 1795: "Our clergy in Bengal, with some exceptions, are not respectable characters."

Although Carey and his fellow-missionary were allowed to enter Calcutta (November 11, 1793) without opposition, indeed without notice (so obscure they were), yet under the existing conditions of things he had to preach his religion for several years almost like a thief in constant fear of being deported to England. Quite destitute in Calcutta, he had no definite plan for the future. The congregration at home were too poor to give him any assistance, nor could they influence the authorities in England to allow him to settle down peacefully as a missionary, for the latter would instantly refuse to listen to a handful of country no-bodies the chief among whom was a shoe-maker. After several fruitless attempts to settle down, Carey at last succeeded in obtaining the situation of an assistant in charge of some

Attempts at settlement.

indigo factories at Madnābatī, 30 miles north of Maldah, the scene of John Ellerton's labours. All these years, however, the idea of translating the Bible and preaching in the language of the people was ever present in his mind. As soon as he could settle down, he applied himself to the study of Bengali, which, his biographer tells us, the indefatigable scholar had already begun during the voyage, and of which the first indication is given by an entry in his journal two months after he had landed. "This day" he writes "finished the correction of the first chapter of Genesis, which Munshi says is rendered into very good Bengali."[1] The Munsi or Bengali teacher referred to was one Ram Basu who not only taught the language to Carey but also had been of much help to the poor missionary during the years of uncertainty and struggle at the outset of his career. The greatest difficulty, however, which puzzled him, as a foreigner, in learning the language relates to the unsettled state of its forms and expressions, of its grammar and orthography : and a vast difference seemed to him to exist between the literary language and its corrupt colloquial and dialectal forms. Thus he speaks with a naivete characteristic of himself in a letter, dated October 2, 1795 : "The language spoken by the natives of this part, though Bengali, is so different from the language itself (?) that I can preach an hour with tolerable freedom so as that all who speak the language or can read or write, understand me perfectly: yet the poor labouring people can understand me little."[2]

Six years in North Bengal.

Carey's efforts to study Bengali.

[1] Smith, *op. cit.* p. 61 ; Eustace Carey, *Memoirs of William Carey*, p. 119.

[2] E. Carey, *op. cit.* p. 242 ; Smith, *op. cit.* p. 72.

Indeed, a foreigner always finds it hard work to obtain in a year the endless variety of its idiom and the niceties of pronunciation: but Carey certainly was very far from right when he says further that although the language is rich, beautiful, and expressive, it has got scarcely a large vocabulary in use about religion and kindred subjects.[1] The whole trend of ancient or pre-British Bengali literature which is religious in subject will prove the inappropriateness of this hasty statement. The half-pitying and half-contemptuous tone in which Carey and his missionary colleagues speak of our forefathers as so many 'heathens', or semi-barbarians[2] no doubt raises our smile today, but they in all sincerity, born of religious enthusiasm, really thought in this way. It is true indeed that there was a partial decadence of religious life and ideals in the country during the last years of the Mohammedan rule, yet Carey and his colleagues in spite of their catholicity and tolerance, could never detect the signs of religious life which could produce the noblest songs of Rām-prasād. From the earliest times to the days of Rām-mohan Rāy and even to the present day, religion had, as we have already stated, a great influence on Bengali literature. The great personality of Chaitanya and his disciples, the songs of the Baiṣṇab poets, breathing as they do the purest language of poetry and devotion—all indicate what charm religion had always possessed for the people and their literature. The fact was, making every possible allowance to missionary fanaticism, that Carey, as he himself admits[3], could lay his hand upon very few ancient Bengali books and manuscripts;

[1] See his letter to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, quoted in E. Carey, *op. cit.* p. 239.

[2] He speaks of this country as one "devoted to the service of Satan and immersed in the awful ignorance of heathenness." E. Carey, *op. cit.* p. 294.

[3] Smith, *op. cit.* p. 202.

and that with the decay of learning and culture in Bengal, the vernacular literature had come to be neglected, and for some time it had practically become non-existent. It was only natural, therefore, for these European scholars from Halhed to Yates, who were not aware of the existence of more than half a dozen Bengali works, to indulge in such sweeping and hasty statements.

In his study of Bengali, Carey found out very early that without the classical Sanscrit, which he always regarded as "the parent of nearly all the colloquial dialects of India."[1], he could neither master its Bengali offshoot nor enrich that vernacular with effective literary forms and combinations. If one must borrow, one might go to the literatures of Europe for themes and methods but the expression must always be indigenous. It is significant indeed that all the early Bengali writers from Carey to Bidyāsāgar, whose writings have helped to create for us the Bengali prose, were learned in the Sanscrit language, and were therefore always ready to avail themselves of the rich treasures of forms and expressions which that classical language afforded. Carey applied himself to Sanscrit with so much industry that as early as April 1796 we find him writing home that he had made enough progress in the language to read the *Mahābhārat*; and that in 1798 he had compiled a Sanscrit grammar and the considerable portion of a Sanscrit-English dictionary.[2] It must be remembered that Sanscrit learning and literature were much patronised in those days and the first step taken by the government towards the education of the native-born subjects was inspired by the desire for the promotion of Sanscrit scholarship.

His study of Sanscrit and its effect.

[1] Preface to *Sanscrit Grammar* (1806).

[2] See also his letter to Sutcliffe, June 16, 1798, quoted in E. Carey's *op. cit.* p. 323.

After six years in North Bengal as a missionary, scholar, and indigo-planter, Carey found that a few insignificant villages of two or three dozen mud-walled cottages hardly afforded sufficient scope for his missionary work. He was forming the project of a Mission Settlement on the Moravian model, but in 1799 the indigo works at Madnābatī had to be given up. Carey had been thinking of taking another small indigo factory in the neighbourhood, when he learned that he was soon to be joined in his missionary work by four colleagues from England. The expected re-inforcement consisted of Joshua Marshman and his wife, William Ward, Daniel Brunsdon,[1] and William Grant. The original intention was to proceed to Maldah and settle with Carey at Madnābatī. They arrived off Calcutta on October 12, 1799 in an American ship; but instead of landing, they proceeded to Śrīrāmpur where they could be safe under the protection of the Danish flag. Their object in choosing Śrīrāmpur as a mission-centre is thus given by Carey[2]; "At Serampore we can settle as missionaries, which is not allowed here; and the great ends of the mission, particularly the printing of the Scriptures, seem much more likely to be answered in that situation...In that part of the country inhabitants are far more numerous than in this; and other missionaries may be there permitted to join us, which here it seems they will not." In the beginning of the last century Śrīrāmpur was a kind of *Alsatia*—'a city of refuge'; and the persecuted missionaries

Work at Madnābatī given up.

Reinforcement from England.

Śrīrāmpur, why chosen as a mission-centre.

[1] For a sketch of Brunsdon's life, see W. H. Carey, *Oriental Christian Biography*, vol. i, pp. 170-72.

[2] Smith, *op. cit.* p. 88.

could surely do no better than seek its protection for the purposes of their mission. In selecting this city instead of any other, they did what was best under the circumstances. "Had we stayed at Mudnabutty or its vicinity" Carey wrote "it is a great wonder we could have set up our press; Government would have suspected us, though without reason to do so and would, in all probability, have prevented us from printing; the difficulty of procuring proper materials would also have been almost insuperable."[1] Śrīrāmpur is situated in one of the richest and most densely peopled tracts in Bengal, very close to the metropolis; and it was here that the earliest European factories in Bengal were established, the Danes planting themselves at Śrīrāmpur, the French at Chandan-nagar, the Dutch at Chinsurah, the English at Hugli, and the Portuguese at Bandel.

Carey leaves North Bengal and joins Marshman and Ward at Śrīrāmpur (1800).

Two of the missionaries speedily fell victims to the climate. Marshman and Ward, whose names are indissolubly linked with that of Carey, who had taken up his residence with them on January 16, 1800, resolved to start systematic mission-work, forming a brotherhood somewhat on the idea of the Pentecostal Church. The mission in its disinterestedness, its lofty aims, and its kindly commonsense deserves sympathetic study. The spirit which animated them is to be clearly seen in the Form of Agreement, drawn up by them, which exhibits the high aims, the simple and disinterested life of work to which the Śrīrāmpur brethern bound themselves from the beginning. This earnest

The Śrīrāmpur Mission started.

[1] E. Carey, *op. cit.* p. 379-80.

philanthropy and self-sacrifice never failed to make an impression upon the hearts of the people and this is one of the reasons why the Śrīrāmpur mission had been able to wield an enormous influence in the country. One of the principles which regulated the whole course of the Mission was that a missionary must consider himself as one of the companions and equals of the people to whom he had been sent and that he must endeavour to gain a thorough knowledge of those among whom he laboured in their modes of thinking and feeling: this was what brought them nearer to the people and gained their confidence. They had started a school at Śrīrāmpur as early as May 1, 1800. In their letter to the Society at home, we find the missionaries writing in October 10, 1800: "There appears to be a growing familiarity between us and the natives. They receive our printed papers with the greatest eagerness and we cannot doubt but that they are pretty extensively read."[1] Without this sympathy, self-denial, and high motives of philanthropy and love, they would not have been able to attract the people and mould their life and thought in the way they had done.

The secret of its success and influence

Of the two fellow-workers of Carey, Joshua Marshman, son of a weaver and for sometime a bookseller's employee in London, was born at Westbury in Wiltshire, April 20, 1768.[2] After much struggle and privation he succeeded in obtaining the mastership of a school in

Joshua Marshman (1768-1837).

[1] E. Carey, *op. cit.* p. 496.

[2] For more details, see Marshman, *History of Serampore Mission*, 2 vols (1859); *Bengal Obituary*, pp. 340-43; *Dict. of National Biography*; W. H. Carey, *Oriental Christian Biography*, vol. iii, pp. 257-65.

Bristol, and while living there he was baptised and volunteered to go out to India as an assistant to Carey. He was a man not only of great mental capacity, endowed with what the Scotch call "a long head", but also had fine administrative ability which kept the missionary community in perfect order. William Ward, though inferior in intellectual equipment, was a man of great practical ability and sound common-sense. He was born at Derby on October 20, 1769.[1] The son of a builder, he had received some education and had been apprenticed to a printer. He rose to the position of the editor of the *Derby Mercury* and afterwards of a newspaper in Hull. It was at Hull five years before he came out to India, Carey had met Ward and said to him "If the Lord bless us, we shall want a person of your business to enable us to print the Scriptures: I hope you will come after us." He joined the Church in 1796 and came out to India in 1799 at the invitation of Dr. Carey. His work like that of Marshman, from 1800, was connected, if not identified, with that of the Mission at Śrīrāmpur. Ward, however, had very little connexion with Bengali literature[2] except indirectly, much less than Carey and Marshman, to whom, as to no other missionary or foreign writer, the country owes a deep debt of obligation for furthering the cause of education and indirectly of modern Bengali prose.

William Ward, (1769-1823).

[1] For more details, see *Hist. of Serampore Mission*. Also Samuel Stennett, *Memoirs of the Life of William Ward* (1825); *Bengal Obituary*, pp. 343-45; *Dict. of National Biogr.*: *Memoir of Ward*, Philadelphia; Simpson's *Life* prefixed to Ward on Hindus; W. H. Carey, *Orient. Christ. Biograph.* vol. ii, pp. 1-6 et. seq.

[2] Ward, says Carey, could speak Bengali a little (E. Carey, *op. cit.* p. 424). Ward, however, wrote some tracts in Bengali which will be noticed hereafter.

Printing of the Bengali Bible, 1801.

One of the earliest works that the Mission accomplished was the printing of the New Testament in Bengali on Feb. 7, 1801 after a labour of nine months[1] and of the Old Testament between 1802 and 1809. Carey, while at Madnābatī, had completed the translation of the greater portion of the Bible by the year 1798 with the exception of the historical books from Joshua to Job.[2] He had gone to Calcutta to obtain the estimates of printing but had found it beyond his slender means : for the cost of printing 10,000 copies was estimated at nearly Rs. 43,750.[3] To have got it printed in England was well-nigh impracticable, for he had found that each

History of its printing.

[1] Preface to the *Serampore Letters* (1800-1816) ed. by L. and M. Williams, with an introductory memoir by Thos. Wright; also see Marshman, *History of Serampore Mission*. But see *Bengal Obituary*, pp. 338.

[2] He had begun the translation as soon as he could fairly learn the language. We find him writing to Sutcliffe only a year after his arrival (Aug. 9, 1794) : "The language (of Bengali) is copious and I think beautiful. I begin to converse in it a little.. ... .I intend to send you a copy of Genesis, Matthew, Mark and James in Bengali; with a small vocabulary and grammar of the language, in manuscripts, of my own composition" (E. Carey, *op. cit.* p. 195). On July 17, 1796, he writes to Fuller that "almost all the Pentateuch and the New Testament are now completed" (*ibid* p. 265). By 1799, almost the whole of the Bible was translated. It is customary to attribute the authorship of the entire Bengali Bible to Carey, but from the report of the work given by him (*ibid* p. 345, Letter to Fuller, dated July 17, 1799) we find that in the first version, Fountain (d. Aug. 1800) and Thomas helped him much. Fountain translated 1 and 2 Kings, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 and 2 Samuel and 2 Chronicles ; while Thomas undertook Matthew, Mark (ii-x), Luke, and James. All the rest was Carey's own as well as the whole correction. The correction, however, sometimes rendered the original version into quite a new work, especially in the case of Thomas's translation which was very incorrect and imperfect (*ibid* p 323; *Periodical Accounts*, vol. i, pp. 20-21.)

[3] E Carey, *op. cit.* p. 277 and also p. 368 ; see also p. 239.

punch would cost a guinea a piece. After several fruitless attempts, when the project had appeared almost incapable of accomplishment, Carey saw a wooden printing press advertised in Calcutta for £40. He at once purchased it at Rs. 400 and set it up at Madnābatī. It was from this old press, subsequently removed to Śrīrāmpur that the first edition of the Bengali New Testament was printed.[1] The types were set with the knowledge of a first-rate printer by Ward with his own hand, assisted by Carey's son, Felix.[2] The second edition was

[1] Smith, *op. cit.* p. 181 ; E. Carey *op. cit.* p. 330.

[2] If we leave aside Ellerton's New Testament and Thomas's version of Genesis and other books of the Bible (1791), this is the first effort at an entire translation of the Bible into Bengali. Ellerton's version, however, was not published till 1820, and Thomas himself got much help from Carey in his translation.

Of John F. Ellerton (1768-1820), nothing much is known except that he was an indigo-planter and was the first to establish a Bengali school in Maldah. He wrote (1) মঙ্গল সমাচার মাতিউ রচিত। Calcutta 1819. (2)মঙ্গল সমাচার যোহন রচিত। Calcutta 1819 in Bengali and English (3) জগত্তারক প্রভু যিশু খ্রীষ্টের মঙ্গল সমাচার। or the New Testament, translated by J. F. Ellerton, Calcutta 1820, pp. 993. This last-mentioned work, though discontinued for a time on learning that Carey was engaged on a similar work was at last printed by the Calcutta Bible Society. See the *Fifteenth Report of the British and Foreign Bible Soc.* London 1819, pp. 214 and 319 ; 1818, App. p. 24 (4) গুরু শিষ্যের প্রশ্নোত্তর ধারাতে সৃষ্ট্যাদির বিবরণ or *Account of the Creation of the World and of the First Age*, in the form of a dialogue between a master and his pupil, Calcutta 1820. In *Cal. Rev.* vol. viii, 1850, this work is probably referred to as গুরুশিক্ষা. See Long, *Introduction to Adam's Reports* : Smith, *op. cit.* p. 145 : *Cal. Rev.* 1850 : *The Bengal Obituary* (1851) p. 144 : Blumhardt, *Catalogue*. For Thomas, see *Life of John Thomas* by C. B. Lewis (1873). The books of the Old Testament, as printed by the Serampore Press (1801-9) are in 4 vols. viz., 1. Pentateuch, 1801 ; 2. Joshua-Esther, 1809 ; 3. Job-Song of Solomon, 1804 ; 4. Isiah-Malachi, 1805. According to the Serampore Memoirs, however, the correct dates of publication are:

John F. Ellerton. (1768-1820).

published in 1803 :[1] but it was prepared from a fount of more elegant and smaller size, constructed by Manohar. The story of its printing is thus told in the *Memoir relative to Translations*,

The Press at Śrīrāmpur.

"Happily for us and India at large Wilkins had led the way in this department ; and persevering industry, under the greatest disadvantages with respect to materials and workmen, had brought the Bengali (*sic*) to a high degree of perfection. Soon after our settling at Serampore the providence of God brought to us the very artist who had wrought with Wilkins in that work, and in a great measure imbibed his ideas. By his assistance, we erected a letter-foundry ; although he is now dead he had so fully communicated his art to a number of others, that they carry forward the work of type-casting, and even of cutting the matrices, with a degree of accuracy which would not disgrace European artists."[2] The

Pañchānan and Manohar.

1. 1802 ; 2. 1809 ; 3. 1803 ; 4. 1807. The Psalter appears to have been issued separately in 1803. A revised edition appeared in 1832. The New Testament was published in 1801. [See Appendix II at the end of this volume for a note on Biblical translations]. In *Cal. Rev.* x, p. 136, the date of Ellerton's New Testament is erroneously given as 1816. For John Thomas's translation of the Scriptures, see Murdoch, *Catalogue of Christian Vernacular Literature of India*, pp. 4 and 5. Smith, *op. cit.* p. 179. Thomas's version (before 1791) was circulated in manuscript. Kaye, *Christianity in India*, p. 138, speaks of this version as having been done in "scarcely intelligible Bengalee." See Carey, *Orient. Christ. Biography*, vol. i, pp. 444-454.

[1] 3rd Ed. 1811 ; 4th Ed. 1816 ; 8th Ed. 1832. The date in the text is the date of the 2nd Ed. as given by Marshman ; but Smith (p 188) gives 1806 as the date. The fact is that the edition was commenced in 1803 and completed in 1806. See Appendix II at the end of this volume.

[2] *Memoir relative to the Translation of the Sacred Scriptures into the Languages of the East*, Serampore, 1816, by Marshman. The Bible

artist referred to above as Wilkins' assistant was Pañchānan,[1] of whom we have already spoken. Pañchānan's apprentice Manohar continued to make elegant founts of type in all the Eastern languages for sale as well as for the Mission, where he was "employed for 40 years and to his exertion and instruction Bengal is indebted for the various beautiful types of Bengali, Nagri, Persian, Arabic, and other characters which have been gradually introduced into the different printing establishments."[2]

Translation of the Bible; its importance in Bengali literature.

Much misconception seems to exist as to the exact nature of the services done by Carey to Bengali literature by translating the Bible into that language. No doubt, here was the realisation of one of the highest ambitions of Carey as a missionary and in the history of Church Missions, it occupies a very high and well-deserved position. Carey has been called by enthusiastic admirers the Wyclif and the Tyndal, while Dr. Yates the Coverdale of the Bengali Bible.[3] Whatever may be the value of such comparisons, from the standpoint of Bengali literature it is, however, to say the least, ill-informed and misleading. The position which Wyclif's, Tyndal's and Coverdale's versions respectively occupy in the history as well as the literature of England

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was translated through the efforts of the Śrīrāmpur Mission into 40 different languages and dialects. See also *Periodical Accounts relative to the Baptist Mss. Soc.* vol i, pp. 292, 368, 417, 527 : vol ii pp. 62. 132. See remarks on these oriental translations in William Brown, *History of Missions*, vol, ii. p. 71.

[1] Pañchānan lived for only 3 or 4 years after this. *Bengal Obituary* p 338.

[2] *Marshman, Hist. of Serampur Mission* vol. i. p. 179.

[3] Smith *op. cit.* p. 186. But see Brown *Hist. of Missions*, vol. ii, p. 71 where Carey's version is impartially estimated to be now "given up as of no great value." See *Cal. Rev.* x, p. 134; *Cal. Christ. Observ.* vol. xvii. p. 557.

is not the same as that which Carey's or Yates' translations can ever aspire to attain[1]. There might be some point in comparing Carey's version to Wyclif's, for the latter cannot, it is well-known, compete as literature with that produced two centuries later in English and consequently possesses nothing save an historical attraction. But Coverdale's claim rests on his supposed principal share in the merits of the early Tudor translations of the Bible. To compare these early English versions of the Bible with the Bengali ones of Carey and Yates would be to make a wrong estimate of both. As a piece of literature the Bengali version cannot be said to be a masterpiece in the sense in which the English versions are. That the English version, whether of 1535 or of 1611, is a monument of early English prose; that its peculiar style—"the swan-song" as happily put "of Middle English transferred from verse to prose"—has always been the admiration of best critics and writers from generation to generation; and that there is no better English anywhere than the English of the Bible; of these facts there can be no doubt. But to speak of Carey's and Yates' versions in similar terms would not only be incorrect but ludicrous. Here is the version of one of the most sublime passages of the Bible—the account of the creation at the beginning; but the reader will note that the translation is not only imperfect and crude, the grammar incorrect, the idiom faulty, the syntax crabbed and obscure, but also the whole thing looks like an absolutely foreign growth vainly attempted to be acclimated in Bengali.

প্রথমে ঈশ্বর সৃজন করিলেন স্বর্গ ও পৃথিবী। পৃথিবী শূন্য ও অস্থিরাকার হইল এবং গভীরের উপরে অন্ধকার ও ঈশ্বরের আত্মা

[1] Or even Wenger's (1861) or Rouse's (1897) later revisions.

দোলায়মান হইলেন জলের উপর। পরে ঈশ্বর বলিলেন দীপ্তি হউক তাহাতে দীপ্তি হইল তখন ঈশ্বর সে দীপ্তি বিলক্ষণ দেখিলেন। তৎপরে ঈশ্বর দীপ্তি অন্ধকার বিভিন্ন করিলেন। ঈশ্বর ও দীপ্তির নাম রাখিলেন দিবস ও অন্ধকারের নাম রাত্রি। সন্ধ্যা ও প্রাতকাল হইলে হইল প্রথম দিবস।

এবং ঈশ্বর বলিলেন আকাশ হউক জলের মধ্যস্থলে ও সে জল এ জল প্রথক করুক। অতএব ঈশ্বর সৃজন করিলেন আকাশ ও প্রথক করিলেন আকাশের উপরের জল নিচের জল হইতে। তাহাতে সে মত হইল। ঈশ্বর সে আকাশের নাম রাখিলেন স্বর্গ সন্ধ্যা ও প্রাতকাল হইলে হইল দ্বিতীয় দিবস।

এবং ঈশ্বর বলিলেন স্বর্গের নিচের জল একত্তর হউক এক স্থানে ও সুস্ক ভূমি প্রকাশ হউক। তাহাতে সেই মত হইল। পরে ঈশ্বর সে সুস্ক ভূমির নাম রাখিলেন পৃথিবী ও সে জলের একত্তরের নাম রাখিলেন সমুদ্র। ঈশ্বর ও তাহা দেখিলেন বিলক্ষণ। পরে ঈশ্বর বলিলেন পৃথিবী উৎপন্ন করুক অঙ্কুশ ও বীজ দায়িক তৃণ ও ফল বৃক্ষ যাহা ফল ফলিবে। আপনারানুযায়ি যাহার বীজ আপনার মধ্যে পৃথিবীর উপর। তাহাতে সেই মত হইল। অতএব পৃথীবী উৎপন্ন করিল অঙ্কুশ ও বীজ দায়িক তৃণ আপনারানুযায়ি ও ফলদায়িক বৃক্ষ যাহার বীজ আপনার মধ্যে আপনার প্রকারানুযায়ি। ঈশ্বর ও দেখিলেন তাহা বিলক্ষণ। সন্ধ্যা ও প্রাতকাল হইলে হইল তৃতীয় দিবস।

তখন ঈশ্বর বলিলেন দীপ্তি হউক স্বর্গের আকাশের মধ্যে দিবারাত্রি বিভিন্ন করিতে ও তাহা হউক চিহ্ন ও কাল ও দিবস ও বৎসর নিরূপণের কারণ। তাহারা ও দীপ্তি হউক স্বর্গের আকাশে উজ্জল করিতে পৃথীবীর উপর। তাহাতে সেই মত হইল। তারপরে ঈশ্বর নির্ম্মাণ করিলেন দুই বড় দীপ্তি বড়তর দীপ্তি দিবসের কর্তৃত্ব করিতে ক্ষুদ্রতর দীপ্তি রজনির কৃতিত্ব করিতে তিনি ও নির্ম্মাণ করিলেন তারাগণ। ঈশ্বর ও স্থাপন করিলেন তাহারদিগকে স্বর্গের আকাশে উজ্জল করিতে

পৃথীবিতে ও কর্তৃত্ব করিতে দিবারাত্রির উপর ও দীপ্তি অন্ধকার বিভিন্ন করিতে। ঈশ্বর ও দেখিলেন তাহা বিলক্ষণ। সন্ধ্যা ও প্রাতকাল হইলে হইল চতুর্থ দিবস।

তাহার পরে ঈশ্বর বলিলেন জল উদ্ভব করুক অপদ জন্তু ও পক্ষ উড়ুক পৃথীবির উপর স্বর্গের আকাশে। সেই মত ঈশ্বর নির্ম্মাণ করিলেন বড় কুম্ভীর ও সুশকাদি প্রতি জন্তু যাহা জলে গতি করে তাহারদের জাত্যানুযায়ি ও প্রতিপক্ষ তাহারদের জাত্যানুয়ায়ি। ঈশ্বর ও দেখিলেন তাহা বিলক্ষণ। ঈশ্বর ও আশীর্ব্বাদ দিলেন তাহারদিগকে কহিয়া বাড় ও বংশ বৃদ্ধ ও পূর্ণং হও সমুদ্রের জলে পক্ষ ও বংশ বৃদ্ধ হউক পৃথীবীর উপর। সন্ধ্যা ও প্রাতকাল হইলে হইল পঞ্চম দিবস।

(ধর্ম্মপুস্তক। পৃঃ ১—৩)[1]

The Bengali style however in these versions, it will be seen, is not laboured but directed towards simplicity, and some attempt is made, in however groping fashion, to reproduce the poetry and magnificence of the Biblical style, so far as it was possible to do so in that early stage of Bengali prose.[2] Yet, as the

[1] ধর্ম্মপুস্তক। তাহা ঈশ্বরের সমস্ত বাক্য। যাহা প্রকাশ করিয়াছেন মনুষ্যের ত্রাণ ও কার্য্যশোধনার্থে। তাহার প্রথম ভাগ যাহাতে চারি বর্গ, মোশার ব্যবস্থা, যিশরালের বিবরণ, গীতাদি, ভবিষ্যত বাক্য। মোশার ব্যবস্থা। তর্জ্জমা হইল ঙেব্রিভাষা হইতে। শ্রীরামপুরে ছাপা হইল। ১৮০১। The English title-page is as follows: The Holy Bible, containing the Old Testament and the New: translated out of the original tongues. Serampore. Printed at the Mission Press. 1802. The title-page of vol ii (New Testament) is as follows: ধর্ম্মপুস্তক তাহার অন্তভাগ। তাহা আমারদের প্রভু ও ত্রাণকর্ত্তা যেশু খ্রীষ্টের মঙ্গল সমাচার। তর্জ্জমা হইল গ্রীক ভাষা হইতে। শ্রীরামপুরে ছাপা হইল। ১৮০১।

[2] No pains were spared, it seems, to make the version as accurate and natural as possible. Carey revised it four times before publication with Rām Basu, "the most accomplished Bengali scholar of the time," by his side. The Pundits judged of the style and syntax and he himself of the faithfulness of the translation. (E. Carey, *op. cit.* p. 308). In 1815 Carey took Yates as an associate with himself in these translations. "His special care" says W.H. Carey (*Orient. Christ. Biography*, vol. i, p. 319) "was bestowed upon the Bengali version."

following extract from Pharaoh's dream in the revised version of Yates will indicate, how immature and crude the style is and what presumption it is to compare this with the traditional excellence of the Biblical style ![1]

একদিনে পূর্ব্বকালীয় মিসরদেশের ফিরৌণ্ রাজ এই স্বপ্ন দেখিল। সে নদীকূলে দাঁড়াইয়া থাকিলে নদী হইতে সাতটা হৃষ্টপুষ্ট সুন্দর গোরু উঠিয়া প্রান্তরে চরিতে লাগিল। পরে আর সাতটা কৃশ ও কুৎসিৎ গোরু নদী হইতে উঠিয়া নদীর তীরে ঐ গোরুদের নিকট দাঁড়াইল। পরে সেই কৃশ কুৎসিৎ গোরু ঐ সপ্ত হৃষ্টপুষ্ট সুন্দর গোরুকে গ্রাস করিল। তখন ফিরৌণের নিদ্রাভঙ্গ হইল। তাহার পরে ফিরৌণ নিদ্রিত হইলে দ্বিতীয় বার স্বপ্ন দেখিল। এক বোঁটাতে সাত স্থূলাকার উত্তম শীষ উঠিল। পরে পূর্ব্বীয় বায়ুতে শুষ্ক আর সাত ক্ষীণ শীষ উঠিল। এবং সেই সাত ক্ষীণ শীষ ঐ সাত স্থূলাকার পূর্ণ শীষ গ্রাস করিল। পরে ফিরৌণের নিদ্রাভঙ্গ হইলে তাহা স্বপ্নমাত্র হইল।

It has been further remarked with regard to these Bengali versions that while the ideas of the Bible elaborate the notions of the readers, the language of it accustoms them to the disuse of the vulgar *patois*. All the resources of the language, gram natical and

[1] Of course, this is a great improvement upon the original version of 1802 which runs as follows :—

দুই বৎসর পূর্ণ হইলে এইমত হইলে ফারোঙা স্বপ্ন দেখিল দেখ সে ডাঙাইয়াছে নদীর কিনারায় দেখ নদী হইতে উঠিল সুন্দর হিষ্টপুষ্ট সাতটা গাভী ও চরিতে লাগিল ধারের উপর দেখ তাহার পরে আর সাতটা গাভী উঠিল নদী হইতে বড় কুচ্ছিত ও কৃষা পরে নদিতীরে ডাঙাইল আর সকল গাভীর কাছে অতঃপর কুচ্ছিত কৃষা গাভীরা খাইয়া ফেলাইল যে সাতটা সুন্দর হৃষ্টপুষ্ট গাভীরদিগকে। তখন ফারোঙার চৈতন্য হইল। পরে সে পুনর্ব্বার নিদ্রিত হইয়া স্বপ্ন দেখিল দেখ সাত শিষ শস্য উৎপন্ন হইল একগাছ তৃণের উপর তাজা ও বিলক্ষণ তারপর দেখ পুবিয়া বায়তে শুষ্ক করা সাতটা পাতলা শিষ উৎপন্ন হইল পরে সে সাতটা শিষ খাইয়া ফেলিল সে সাতটা তাজা শিষেরদিগকে তখন ফারোঙা জাগ্রত হইল। (ধর্ম্মপুস্তক, প্রথমভাগ, পৃঃ ৪১)

lexicographical, are called out to indicate (1) new and foreign and (2) noble ideas.[1] Hence, it is argued, the importance of the translated Bible in Bengali literature. The remark, however, would have been perfectly true and appropriate had the condition of things been in India what it had always been in Europe. The Bible is the one book in the European countries which is a universal favourite, and its ideas and language have through many centuries become almost a part of the ideas and language of the people at large. To this is partly due the enormous influence of the sacred book on the languages and literatures of Europe. The Bengali Bible, however, has failed to exercise any such influence. In India, where the missionaries can boast of very few triumphs among the educated class and the Bible is not so familiarly known and universally respected, the case is not the same as it is in Europe. Again, it is true that in all translations the resources of the language are drawn out to the utmost and that translation is the best exercising ground for an infant literature, yet even as a piece of translation, the Bengali Bible cannot in any sense be regarded as a triumph of the translator's art, and the very strain in expressing strange and alien ideas with a limited command over the inherent powers of the language, makes the style crabbed, stilted, and unnatural. The missionary writings in Bengali have a sort of traditional repute for crabbed syntax and false juxtaposition of words; here surely the tradition for once is not misleading. Indeed, in spite of all that can be said in favour of the versions, no critic, however alive to their importance

[1] *Cal. Rev.* vol. xiii. 1850 Art "Early Bengali Literature and Newspaper." p. 139.

as the earliest specimen of simple and homely prose, can ever claim any thing like literary competency for them marked that they are throughout by earliness and immaturity. Carey's claim to importance as a contributor to Bengali literature does not rest so much upon his Bible-translations and numerous tracts on Christianity, but on the works which he produced in another sphere of usefulness but on which he himself seems to have laid less emphasis although they show him in a better light as a writer of Bengali.

Carey at Fort William College.

This sphere of usefulness was first opened to Carey by his appointment as a teacher of Bengali in Lord Wellesley's newly established Fort William College. It is to be noted, however, that it was the publication of the Bible-translation and his reputation as the foremost European scholar of Bengali that had secured the appointment which placed him in a position, philological and financial, to further the cause of Bengali writing. It was more to his connexion with the Fort William College and his growing influence as a writer and scholar in Bengali than to his position as a preacher of the Gospels that we owe every thing that he did for enriching Bengali literature.

CHAPTER V

William Carey and Fort William College.

Importance of the Fort William College in the history of Bengali prose.

Among the institutions which in various ways gave an impetus to Bengali literature, we must give a prominent place to the Fort William College. Since the practical disappearance of Bengali literature after Bhārat-chandra's death, its first public emergence is to be traced in the prose publications of this College, which, although no literature by themselves, certainly heralded the more mature productions of later days. The importance of the Fort William College in the history of modern Bengali prose is not due to the supreme excellence of its publication (for its publications were not in any way first-rate) but to the fact that by its employment of the Press, by pecuniary and other encouragement, by affording a central place for the needed contact of mind to mind, it gave such an impetus to Bengali learning, as was never given by any other institution since the establishment of the British rule. It is true that the books published under its patronage and generally for the use of its students were not more numerous or more substantial than those of the famous School Book Society of later times; but it must be admitted that the list presents a long series of important compositions in the vernacular and classical languages of the East on a variety of subjects and comprehends many works which, though written expressly for young civilian students, were at one time widely celebrated in this country, and which have not

yet lost all their value and interest. But this was not all. The College was the seminary of western learning in an eastern dress; it helped to diffuse western ideas through the medium of the vernacular. But at the same time, orientalism was its principal feature, and it turned the attention of students and scholars to the cultivation of oriental languages, both classical and vernacular. "The establishment of the College of Fort William" said Sir George Barlow at the first Disputation of the College held so early as 1802 "has already excited a general attention to oriental language, literature and knowledge."[1] We can realise what this means when we bear in mind the general neglect and oblivion to which Bengali literature and Bengali education had hitherto been consigned. The Honourable Visitor of 1815 in remarking on the encouragement held out by the College for the study of the leading oriental languages observed that previously to the foundation of the College "the language of Bengal was generally neglected and unknown".[2] The best scholars and the greatest intellects of the country met here in friendly intercourse; and we shall see how an attractive personality like Carey's drew around it a band of enthusiastic writers, bent upon removing the poverty of their vernacular. At the invitation and inducement of such scholars, literary works were undertaken by the enlightened Bengali community as well as by the Munshis and Pundits of the College who would

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[1] Roebuck, *Annals of the College of Fort William* (1819), p. 17; *The College of Fort William* 1805 ed. by Claudius Buchanan, Vice-Provost & Professor of the College (See Pearson's *Memoirs of Rev. Claudius Buchanan*, 1819, vol. i, p. 202 foot-note) containing all the official papers and literary proceedings of the College, p 58 at p. 62; See also Seton-Karr, *Selections from Cal. Gazette*, vol. iii, p. 296-99: etc.

[2] Roebuck, *op. ci* p. 468.

possibly have produced nothing but for the stimulus thus given to their literary zeal and the encouragement yielded by the liberality of the government which would have never otherwise been so readily called into being.[1] The movement for undertaking literary and scientific works in Bengali prose and for translation into that language, which till 1850 had been so conspicuous an activity in the literary history of Bengal, had its beginning in the publications of the College of Fort William[2] and in the zeal of its scholars, aided no doubt by the fact that exigencies of education and spread of liberal ideas naturally brought on a multiplication of text-books and books of general interest. It is true, speaking generally, that the productions of these devoted scholars, consisting, as they do, mostly of school-books and translations, are far from being invulnerable in point of literary merit; yet to them belongs the credit of breaking fresh ground and creating the all-important Bengali prose-of-all-work. Not that we have no Bengali prose before this, but it was hardly in current use and not so developed as to be the medium of everyday thoughts of the nation.[3] No one can claim for this early prose the finish and all-expressiveness of latter-day prose, but it cannot be denied that here

The value of its publications.

[1] This was a pet scheme of Wellesley's: so the liberality of the Government was magnificent.

[2] The popular opinion, aided, no doubt, by the extreme scarcity of these publications in the present day as well as by ignorant or careless criticism, often deriving its informations second-hand, that these publications were seldom or never read, is not borne out by contemporary allusions referring to these works and their extensive sale, running them through numerous editions within half a century. Most of these publications afforded an endless quarry of fables and stories, always interesting to an oriental reader.

[3] See App. I.

we have, if not art, at least craftmanship; if precisely no work of genius, at least the hint and intimation of such close at hand.

Its foundation (1800) and object.

The College of Fort William which was actually in operation from May 4, 1800[1] was formally established on August 18 by a Minute in Council in which the Governor-General detailed at length the reasons for starting such an institution.[2] No sooner did Lord Wellesley find himself freed from the uncongenial bonds of war in the South than he devoted himself to various measures of internal administration with an ardour seldom equalled except perhaps by Lord Bentinck whom he so closely resembled. The Company's Civil Service, although it produced a few men of first-rate ability, had sunk into the lowest depths of vice and ignorance. The Service had its origin in a mercantile staff, well-versed in the mysteries of the counting-house; and its training, since the Factory had grown into an Empire, had not been sufficient for the more important duties which now devolved upon it. The system which Burke had reprobated fifteen years ago was still unchanged, and lads of fifteen to eighteen were being sent out to India before their education could be finished, with no opportunity or inducement on their arrival to complete it. At the close of three or four years' residence, the young Civilians, endowed with an affluent income and unchecked authority, had not only lost the fruits of their European studies and gained no useful knowledge of

[1] The First Term of the College commenced from February 6, 1801.

[2] *Minutes in Council at the Fort William* by His Excellency the Most Hon'ble Marquis of Wellesley, containing his reasons for the establishment of a College in Bengal, dated August 18, 1800 (See Roebuck, *op. cit.* p. vi and Buchanan, *op. cit.* p. 8-9.

Asiatic literature or business but were absolutely abandoned to pursue their own inclination without guidance or control. Of the languages and manners of the people whose affairs they were called upon to administer, they were not required to know even the rudiments.[1] The Minute denounced in the strongest terms "the absolute insufficiency of this class of young men to execute the duties of any station whatsoever in the Civil Service of the Company beyond the menial, laborious and unprofitable duty of a mere copying clerk". It became evident that there could be no substantive improvement without providing a succession of men sufficiently qualified to conduct it. "The Civil Servants of the English East India Company" says the Minute[2] "can no longer be considered as the agents of a commercial concern; they are in fact the ministers and officers of a powerful sovereign: they must now be viewed in that capacity with a reference, not to their nominal, but to their real occupation.[3].....Their studies, the discipline of their education, their habits of life, their manners and morals should therefore be so ordered and regulated as to establish.....a sufficient

Lord Wellesley's Minute.

[1] It appears from the proceedings of the Governor-General in Council dated as far back as Sep. 10, 1790 that with a view to the acquisition of the Indian languages by the Company's writers, encouragement was afforded by offering them allowance and other facilities (Seton-Karr, *Selection from Cal. Gazette*, ii. 213-14), but it was never enjoined upon them as a matter of duty or necessity.

[2] Roebuck, *op. cit.* p. iv; Buchanan, *op. cit.* pp. 5-6.

[3] See Seton-Karr, *op. cit.* vol. iii, pp. 22-23. Before the formal establishment of the College, Dr. Gilchrist, an eminent Hindusthani scholar, was appointed provisionally by Lord Wellesley to find out if an experiment of lecturing to young Civilians could be made successful. It succeeded splendidly, as appears from the Report of the Committee appointed to ascertain the progress made in Gilchrist's class (Roebuck, *op. cit.* pp. 1-14; Seton-Karr *Selections from Cal. Gazette*, vol. iii pp. 58-61). After this the scheme of Fort William College was set on foot.

correspondence between their qualifications and their duties" The Minute then declares that "A College is hereby founded at Fort William in Bengal for the better instruction of the Junior Civil Servants of the Company." The institution was projected on a scale of magnificence which marked all the plans of Lord Wellesley, but under the pressure of the authorities at home, who were deadly opposed to the institution and without whose sanction and acquiescence it had been set up, the College was continued on a reduced scale.[1]

The range of studies; its orientalism.

The range of studies marked out for the students in the College was very extensive and one of its most striking features was its orientalism. The curriculum, subsequently modified, was intended to include in its grand scale "Arabic, Persian, Sanskrit, Hindusthani, Bengali, Telegu, Mahratti, Tamil, Kanara", besides "Laws and Regulations, Political Economy, Modern Languages, Greek, Latin, English Classics, General History ancient and modern, History of India, Natural History, Botany, Chemistry and Astronomy"![2] The College was patronised by the Governor-General himself, his colleagues, and the Judges of the Supreme Court; for it was considered to be one of the most important institutions of the State and the senior members of the Government were required in virtue of their office to take a share in its management.

Public disputations in oriental languages.

Public disputations in oriental languages were held annually in the grand edifice which Wellesley had erected, in an august assembly, composed of men of high rank.

[1] The College continued till 1854; but since the foundation of School Book Society and Hindu College in 1817, its importance was overshadowed and diminished.

[2] Roebuck, *op. cit.* p. xvii.

It would interest Bengali readers to learn that debates were held in Bengali and the subject at the First Public Disputation held in February 6, 1802 was "Whether the Asiatics are capable of as high degree of civilisation as Europeans." The theses read by the students were published and they afford us some of the earliest specimens of sustained prose writing attempted by Europeans. We give below the theses pronounced at a disputation in Bengali in the Second Public Disputation held on March 29, 1803 by James Hunter, although we have, as we shall see, better specimens of prose-writing even before this date. This would, however, serve as the *average* specimen of 'European prose' of the time. There are some quaint turns of phrases, a few inevitable mistakes of idiom and syntax and errors of orthography, and the style is a little too crude and sanscritised; yet if we compare with it the contemporary prose of *Pratāpāditya Charitra* (1801) and *Lipimālā* (1802), this specimen will hardly be at a disadvantage with them in many respects[2]. The scarcity of the publications which

Theses by the students of the College.

[1] Reports of the annual Disputations till 1819 will be found in detail in Roebuck, *op. cit.* Also in Buchanan, *op. cit.* till 1805; and also see Seton-Karr, *op. cit.* p. 296; also in *Primitiae Orientales*, vols. i-iii.

[2] Some of the students of the College published notable works. In 1808 Henry Sarjent, who was a distinguished student of Bengali in the College (See Roebuck, *op. cit.* pp. 178-180, 218-221) translated the first four books of the Æneid or Iliad (the first book, according to Long's *Catalogue*, came out in 1805). Monckton, another student, translated Shakespeare's *Tempest*. (*Cal. Rev.* 1850, Art. Beng. Lit.). Long, however, followed by Dinesh-chandra Sen, (*op. cit.* p. 876) mistakes the name of Henry Sarjent for "J Serjeant." From Roebuck *op. cit.* it appears that there was no student in the College bearing the name of "J. Serjeant," and no such person, it would seem from Dodwell and Miles, *op. cit.* ever entered the Civil Service.

contain these theses will be a sufficient excuse for the length of the quotation. The subject was "The Distribution of Hindus into Castes retard their progress in improvement."

হিন্দুলোকেরা ভিন্ন ভিন্ন জাতি এই প্রযুক্ত তাহারদের বিদ্যাবৃদ্ধির হানি হয়।

Thesis at the Second Disputation reproduced, as the average specimen of the Europeanised Bengali prose of the time.

মানুষেরদের নীতিজ্ঞতা এবং শ্বছুতাপ্রাপ্তিসম্বাদিভ্রমন্যায় যখন আমরা দেখি তখন আমরা বিস্ময়াপন্ন হই সকলে বুঝে যে ভিন্ন দেশীয় লোকেরদের ভিন্ন ভিন্ন রীতির এই কারণ যে আপন আপন স্বভাব এবং গ্রীষ্ম শীতের গুণ বহুজ্ঞ দেশীয় ব্যবস্থাপকেরা ব্যবস্থাকরণ কালে এই দুই কারণ প্রধান করিয়া মানিয়াছেন সর্ব্বদেশে পৃথক পৃথক ব্যবহার সংসারের চলন নিমিত্ত অবশ্য মান্য হইয়াছে।

কোন দেশীয় লোকেরা এ পথ মেলা রাক্ষিয়াছে যাহাতে কোন বুদ্ধিমান লোক যদি অতি নীচ হয় তথাচ অতি উত্তম ক্রিয়া করিতে পারে এবং মহা সম্ভ্রম পায় এবং অন্য দেশীয় লোকেরা ভিন্ন ভিন্ন জাতির মধ্যে অলঙ্ঘনীয় প্রাচীরের ন্যায় ভিন্ন ভিন্ন ব্যবহার ব্যবধান করিয়াছে এবং এমন অনন্যথা ভাবি ব্যবহারে নিয়ম করিয়া বিদ্যাবৃদ্ধির ইচ্ছা এবং উত্তম হওনের চেষ্টা স্থকিত করিয়াছে প্রকৃত হিন্দুস্থানের লোকেরদের এই মত তাহারদের ব্যবস্থায় মহানীতি এবং অতিশয় বিদ্যা প্রকাশিত হয় কিন্তু তবে কি ভাল বুঝিয়া পৃথক পৃথক জাতির নিয়ম করিল ইহার কারণ বুঝা কঠিন বরং ইহাতে এইমত বুঝা যায় যে অহংকৃত অজ্ঞানী অসন্ধানী লোকেরা অন্যের মহত্ব লোপ করিয়া আপন আপন মহত্বের বাহুল্য করিয়াছে এবং বিদ্যা ও বুদ্ধি কর্তৃক আরোপিত ভক্তি ও মূর্খতার যে পরাজয় সে এই ধন ও সমাদর পাওনের নিমিত্ত এবং লোকেরদের মনের শান্তা হওনের নিমিত্ত এবং প্রকারান্তরে রাজ্যশাসন করিতে না পারিয়া এই প্রকারে লোকেরদের শাসন নিমিত্ত অজ্ঞানী যাজকতা জাতিবিভেদ সৃষ্টি করিল।

ব্রাহ্মণেরা বলে সৃষ্ট্যারম্ভে ঈশ্বর পৃথক পৃথক চারিবর্ণ সৃজন করিলেন ব্রা ণ ক্ষত্রিয় বৈশ্য শূদ্র ইহারদিগের পৃথক পৃথক ধর্ম্মাচার দ্বিজধর্ম্ম এই সুদ্ধাচার যজন যাজন অধ্যয়ন অধ্যাপন দান প্রতিগ্রহণ ইত্যাদি ক্ষত্রিয়াচার রাজধর্ম্ম ব্রাহ্মণরক্ষণ ধনুর্বিদ্যাঅভ্যাসন শিষ্ট পালন দুষ্টদমন রাজ্যশাসন প্রজাপালন ন্যায্য করগ্রহণ বৈশ্যবৃত্তি কৃষিকর্ম্ম এবং বাণিজ্য শূদ্রের ধর্ম্ম ব্রাহ্মণ সেবামাত্র।

দেখ ব্রাহ্মণ হইয়া যদি নীচবৃত্তি করে তবে তাহার নীচত্ব প্রাপ্তি হয় এবং অন্যোন্য যাবৎ জাতি সমস্তই এইমত ইহাতে সমস্ত লোক আপন আপন জাতি রক্ষণার্থে স্বধর্ম্মনিষ্ঠ থাকে তাহার অন্যথা করে না; ইহাতে জানা যায় যদি কোন লোক আপন জাতির বিশেষ কর্ম্ম জন্মাবধি না করে তবে তাহার সুখ্যাতির হানি হয় কাহার কিছু ক্ষতি হয় কাহার কিছুই থাকেনা সুখ্যাতি গেলে কোন বিদ্যাতে ইচ্ছা হয় না কেন না সুখ্যাতি ও জাতি পুনর্ব্বার হইতে পারে না এমন লোকও পূর্ব্ব বন্ধু দেখিলে মনঃপীড়া পায় এবং সেই লোকও আপন পূর্ব্ব বন্ধু আপন সমান করিতে সক্ত্যনুক্রমে চেষ্টা পায়।

হিন্দুরদের পৃথক পৃথক হওয়া সকল বিদ্যা হওনের প্রতিবন্ধক পুত্র যদি পৈতৃক বিদ্যা ভিন্নান্য বিদ্যাভ্যাসন ইচ্ছুক হয় এবং যোগ্য বুঝা যায় সে পুত্র আপন জাতি রক্ষা প্রযুক্ত স্বীয় অভিলষিত বিদ্যাতে প্রবর্ত্ত হইতে পারে না এই তাহার বুদ্ধি স্ফূর্ত্তির বাধক হয় তাহার স্থল এই যদি কোন শূদ্র বেদবেদাঙ্গ পাঠ করে তবে হিন্দুরদের শাস্ত্রমত এই দণ্ড কর্ত্তব্য অভ্যাসে জিহ্বাছেদন করিবেক ইচ্ছাপূর্ব্বক তাহা শ্রবণ করিলে সে শূদ্রের কর্ণেতে তপ্ত সীসা প্রদান করিবেক আর শূদ্র হইয়া যদি বেদের অর্থ মনেতে ধারণ করে তবে তাহাকে বধ করিতে হয়।

অন্য শাস্ত্র যদি ভাষাতে তর্জ্জমা করে তবে সংস্কৃত শাস্ত্রের গৌরব হানি প্রযুক্ত তাহার অখ্যাতি হয় যেমন মহাভারতের তর্জ্জমা ভাষাতে কাশীদাস নামে এক শূদ্র করিয়াছিল সেই দোষেতে ব্রাহ্মণেরা তাহাকে শাপ দিয়াছিল সেই ভয়েতে অন্য কেহ এখন সে কর্ম্ম করে না।

হিন্দুলোকেরা যদিও আপন শাস্ত্রের নিশ্চয়তে থাকে তবে অন্য দেশের বিদ্যা ও ব্যবহার যদি ভালও হয় তবুও তাহা গ্রহণ করিতে পারে না যদি অন্য দেশের বিদ্যা ও ব্যবহার দেখে কিম্বা স্থনে তথাপি তুচ্ছ করিয়া আদর করে না অতএব অন্য লোকের ব্যবহারেতে তাহারদের জ্ঞানলাভ হইতে পারিবে না।

অন্য দেশের গমন ও অন্য দেশের ব্যবহার দর্শন ও অন্যদেশের বিদ্যাভ্যাসেতে লোকের বুদ্ধির বৃদ্ধি হয় হিন্দুলোকেরদের শাস্ত্রের মতে পশ্চিমে আটক নদী পার হইলে জাতি যায় উত্তরে ভোটান্তর এবং ম্লেচ্ছদেশেও সেই মত এবং ব্রহ্মপুত্র পার হইলে পূর্ব্বধর্ম্ম নষ্ট হয়। দক্ষিণে সমুদ্রপথে জাহাজে থাকিয়া ভোজন পান করিলে জাতি যায়। হিন্দু শাস্ত্রের মতে গোখাদকের সংসর্গ করিলেও দোষ হিন্দুছাড়া যত লোক সকলেই গোমাংস খায় অতএব হিন্দুরা তাহারদের সহিত সহবাস করিতে পারে না এবং যেমত নির্জ্জন উপদ্বীপে কোন ব্যক্তি একাকী থাকে সেইমত এই একাসাড়িয়া রীতিতে তাহারদের বুদ্ধি প্রতিভা জড়িভূতা হইয়াছে এবং তাহারদের উদ্যোগ শিথিল হইয়া অবিনীততা ও স্তব্ধতা হইয়াছে; এই ইয়ুরোপীয়েরদের মধ্যে দস্যু প্রভৃতি অধম লোক হইতেও অধম; কেননা ইহারা স্বস্থান ত্যাগ করিয়া সুক্রিয়ান্বিত হইলে তাহারদের সুখ্যাতি পুনর্ব্বার হইতে পারে কিন্তু ইহারদের কখন ভাল হইতে পারে না হিন্দুরা শাস্ত্রব্যবস্থা কিম্বা মান্য লোকেরা যাদৃচ্ছিক আজ্ঞা লঙ্ঘন করিলেই অপার দুস্থসাগরে পড়ে।

জাতিরূপ হাপা কেবল বুদ্ধিবৃদ্ধির হানি করে না বরং ভিন্নদেশে পরস্পর গমনাগমনের বাধক হয় পরোপকারক জ্ঞান সঞ্চয়েতে কৃপণতা প্রকাশ হয়। অন্য দেশীয় লোকেরদের সংসর্গ হইতে উৎপাদ্য যে জ্ঞান ও বিদ্যারূপ উনুই জাতিকর্তৃক বন্ধ হইয়াছে তাহাতে তাহারা অন্যদেশীয় বিশেষ বিবরণ ও ভূগোলবিদ্যা ও মহানাবিক বিদ্যা ও অস্ত্রচিকিৎসা বিদ্যা ও প্রাণিবিদ্যা ও বৃক্ষাদিবিদ্যা ও জ্যোতিষবিদ্যা ও যুদ্ধবিদ্যা ইত্যাদি আর আর উত্তম বিদ্যাতে অজ্ঞ হইয়াছে বিদ্বান লোক স্বদেশে উৎপন্ন না হইলে বিদ্যাবৃদ্ধি হইতে পারে না নাবিকবিদ্যাদ্বারা

আমারদের প্রায় সকল ভাল হইল এবং যে নূতন বিদ্যাতে লোকেরদের উত্তর উত্তর সুখবৃদ্ধি হয় তাহা প্রকাশ করণের দ্বারা সেই বিদ্যা লোকেরদের মনের তেজকারি হয় কিন্তু হিন্দুরা সমুদ্রগমন করে না অতএব এ সকল হইতে দূর থাকে।

আমি জানি যে তোমরা ইহার অন্যথা বলিবা যেখানে ইয়ুরোপীয়েরা থাকে হিন্দুলোকেরা তাহারদের সেবা করে এবং তাহারদের সহিত ব্যবহার করে ইহাতে হিন্দুলোকেরদের জাতি যায় না ও অখ্যাতি হয় না ইহা আমি স্বীকার করি না কেননা, যদি কোন সত্যবাদী হিন্দুলোককে জিজ্ঞাসা করা যায় তবে সে অবশ্য বলিবেক যে এমন ব্যবহার করে তাহার জাতি নাই কেননা এই প্রকার অনেক লোক এবং অনেক লোক ধনবান হওনেতে কেহ কাহাকে কিছু বলে না। এ সকল বিচার করিয়া আমি বুঝি যে ভিন্ন ভিন্ন জাতি প্রযুক্ত বিদ্যাবৃদ্ধির হানি হয়।[1]

Carey was appointed teacher of Bengali and Sanscrit languages[2] in April 1801. In January 1, 1807 he was raised to the status of a Professor[3] and he continued till 1831 to be the most notable figure in the College of Fort William. This appointment threw Calcutta open to him as a field of work and for the next thirty years from 1801 he spent as much of his time in the metropolis as at Śrīrāmpur. He found the appointment bringing in its train responsible duties but it afforded him an early opportunity not only to cultivate "the beautiful language of Bengal" but also to enrich its literature by his own labours as well as by the labours of others whom he induced to work in the same field. He himself not only wrote

Carey appointed Teacher and Professor of Bengali.

[1] *Primitive Orientalists*, vol. ii. 1803, pp. 67-74, containing theses in the Oriental languages pronounced at the Public Disputations by the Students of the College of Fort William, with translations

[2] Afterwards of the Maharatti language.

[3] Roebuck, *op. cit.* Appendix iv, p. 52 at p. 54; Buchanan, *op. cit.* p 236 at p. 237.

a grammar, compiled a dictionary, and composed text-books but he was at the same time the centre of the learned Bengalis, whom by his zeal he attracted around him as pundits and munsis, as inquirers and visitors. The impetus which he gave to Bengali learning is to be measured not merely by his productions or by his educational labours at this institution or at Śrīrāmpur but also by the influence he had exerted and the example he had set before an admiring public who soon took up his work in earnestness. He had gathered around him a number of scholars who were at first his teachers but whom he had succeeded in employing in extensive literary work. Of the fifteen munsis[1] who taught Bengali in the College, the chief was his own pundit, Mṛtyuñjay, who wrote some of the most learned and elaborate treatises of the time. He induced three other pundits of the College, Rām Basu, Rājīb-lochan and Chaṇḍīcharaṇ, to undertake the composition of vernacular works and he always befriended those who took any interest in the vernacular literature. It was at his suggestion and encouragement that Mohan-prasād Ṭhākur, assistant Librarian to the College of Fort William, compiled his *English-Bengali Vocabulary*[2] (1810) which he dedicated to Dr. Carey. It

His influence and the impetus he gave to literature.

[1] Buchanan, *op cit.* p. 239.

[2] *A Vocabulary Bengali and English* for the use of students, arranged in alphabetical order under different subjects, by Mohan Prasād Ṭhākur (1810); 2nd Ed. 1815; 3rd Edition 1852. *The Calcutta Review* (1852) speaks of it as "exceedingly useful to all students of the Bengali language." On the doubtful authority of Rev. Long (*Catalogue*) the date of this book is fixed to be 1805 by Mr. Sen (*History*, pp. 866-67). The copy (2nd Edition) in the library of the Board of Examiners bears 1815 as the date of publication. Mohan Prasād was appointed Librarian to the College in October, 1807 (Roebuck, *op cit.* App. III. p. 51): so he could not have compiled this work at the suggestion of Carey before this date. See also Preface to Haughton's *Dictionary*.

is needless to multiply examples of works which owed their origin to his suggestion and influence ; but these will go to show how attractive his personality and how extensive his influence had been among his collaborators in the field. "When the appointment was made" he writes on June 15, 1801 "I saw that I had a very important charge committed to me....I therefore set about compiling a grammar, which is now half printed. I got Ram Ram Basu to compose a history of one of their kings ; which we are also printing. Our Pundit[1] has also nearly translated the Sungskrit fables...which we are also going to publish. These, with Mr. Forster's *Vocabulary*, will prepare the way to reading their poetical books: so that I hope this difficulty will be gotten through."[2] Thus Carey's College-room became the centre of incessant literary work as his Śrīrāmpur study had been of Bible-translation. We can imagine the indefatigable scholar in his chamber sitting with his Munsi for three or four hours daily mastering the language in all its complications and with a longing to educate the people, writing and translating hour by hour into Bengali tongue the books which he thought useful for that purpose and which contains the first systematic pieces of spirited Bengali prose.

The orientalism of the College ; its effect.

Thus, although the College of Fort William was founded to fulfil a political mission, its usefulness and its importance, never ended there. The impetus which it gave, as a centre of learning and culture, to the cause of vernacular language and literature, gives it a prominent place in the literary history of the time. No doubt its greatest achievement in the history of

[1] Mṛtyuñjay.

[2] E. Carey, *op. cit.* pp. 450-454 ; Smith, *op. cit.* p. 164.

intellectual progress in this country consists in its revival of the ancient culture of the land, its all-comprehensive orientalism daring far beyond the intrepid dreams of scholars like Sir William Jones, Wilkins, and Colebrooke. But this orientalism embraced a great deal more than a mere revival of classical learning. Attention hitherto had never been turned to vernacular learning in this country which was in a sadly neglected state at the beginning of the century. The College of Fort William, by its encouragement of the vernacular, first brought it into public notice and fostered and nourished it.

The list of its publications between 1800 and 1825.

The list of its publications between 1800 and 1825 comprises, besides 31 works in Hindusthani, 24 in Sanscrit, 20 in Arabic, and 21 in Persian, the following principal works in Bengali[1] chronologically arranged.

1801 *Pratāpāditya Charitra*[1] by Ram Ram Basu.
A Grammar of the Bengalee Language by W. Carey.
Kathopakathan[2] by William Carey.
Hitopadeś translated by Golak-nāth Śarmā.

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[1] This list is based on the lists given in Roebuck, *op. cit.* App. II, p. 29 (A Catalogue of all the Oriental works published under the patronage of the College of Fort William since its Institution in 1800 up to August 15, 1818); in Buchanan, *op. cit.* (List of books printed and published by the Fort William College before 1805) pp. 219-236; in *Primitiae Orientales* (vols.ii-iii p. xlvi), and on the enumeration in Long's *Catalogue* which, however, is not always reliable. In all these cases where (with the one or two exceptions mentioned) I have been able to avail myself of the original editions, I have compared and verified the dates here given. Particulars or details about these works will be found in their proper places below, where each of them has been reviewed in its turn.

[2] It seems to have been published a month later than *Pratāpāditya Charitra.*

1802 *Lipimālā*[1] by Ram Ram Basu.
Batriś Siṁhāsan translated by Mṛtyuñjay Bidyālaṅkār.

1803 *Æsop's Fables* translated[2] into Bengali, under the direction and superintendence of Dr. J. Gilchrist, by Tāriṇīcharaṇ Mitra.

1805 *Totā Itihās* translated from Persian by Chaṇḍīcharaṇ Munsi.
Rājā Kṛṣṇachandra Rāyer Charitra by Rājīb Lochan Mukhopādhyāy.

1808 *Rājābalī* by Mṛtyuñjay Bidyālaṅkār.
Hitopadeś by Mṛtyuñjay Bidyālaṅkār.
Hitopadeś[3] by Rām-kiśor Tarkālaṅkār

1812 *Itihās-mālā*[4] by William Carey.

1813 *Prabodh-chandrikā*[5] by Mṛtyuñjay Bidyālaṅkār.

1815 *Puruṣ-parīkṣā* translated by Haraprasād Rāy.

1815-1825 *A Dictionary of the Bengalee Language*, by William Carey. Vol. I. (The last volume was published in 1825).

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[1] In Buchanan *op. cit.* and *Primitiae Orientales* no name of the author is given, but he is simply described as a "learned native in the College."

[2] This work is also mentioned by Long but not in connexion with the publication of the Fort William College.

[3] Mentioned and dated by Roebuck. I have not been able to obtain sight of this work. In the list of Pundits in the College in 1818, Roebuck mentions Rām-kiṣor Tarkachūḍamaṇi (appointed November 1805) in the Bengali Department.

[4] Doubtful whether a publication of the College, not officially recorded to be such.

[5] Published in 1833, long after the death of the author, with a preface by J. Marshman. Hence not mentioned by Roebuck; but known conclusively to be a publication for the use of the College from the testimony of Carey, Marshman and others.

Barring a few independent works here and there these were all the best publications and the chief writers in Bengali between 1800 and 1825.[1]

Carey's works in Bengali.

Even if we leave aside publications which are indirectly due to his instigation or encouragement, it will be seen that Carey's share in the work was not inconsiderable. Besides the translation of the Bible and numerous Christian tracts, Carey's works in Bengali consist chiefly of the following books :—

(1) *A Grammar of the Bengalee Language.* Printed at the Mission Press. Serampore. 1801. (2nd Edition[2] with alterations 1805; 3rd Ed. 1815; 4th Ed. 1818; 5th Ed. 1845.)

(2) *Kathopakathan*, or *Colloquies* or *Dialogues intended to facilitate the acquiring of the Bengalee Language.* Printed at the Mission Press. Serampore. August,

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[1] In Buchanan *op. cit.* there is a list of books printed during 1803 or in course of publication during the year 1804, at p. 238. In it we find mentioned a work, of which, however, there is no record in Roebuck or anywhere else, viz. Translation of the Bhagabadgītā from Sanscrit into Bengali by Chaṇḍī Charaṇ Munsi. It is not known whether it ever saw the light. In *Primit. Orient.* vol. ii p. l-li, we find the entry of another publication, long supposed to be a missionary publication only and not mentioned in the official records whether of Buchanan or of Roebuck, viz. The Old and the New Testament, translated into the Bengali Language, in 2 vols. It seems to be a reprint of the Śrīrāmpur edition or even the identical publication, transferred to the list of the publications of the Fort William College.

[2] The date of the 2nd Edition is given as 'before 1803' in Buchanan, *op. cit.* p. 222; E. Carey, *op. cit.* p. 474. But Grierson, *Linguistic Survey*, vol. v, pt i, p. 24 says that the 2nd edition was published in 1805; and Wilson (*Life and Labours of Carey*) corroborates it. In the tenth *Memoir* of the Śrīrāmpur mission, the date of the 2nd Ed. is given as 1805. Dinesh Ch. Sen (*Hist. of Beng. Lit.* p. 857) rather inaccurately states that the book passed through four editions before 1855.

1801 (3rd Ed. 1818.) Originally a part of the Bengali Grammar. The title varies slightly in different editions.

(3) *Itihās-mālā* or a collection of stories in the Bengalee language collected from various sources. Serampore. Printed at the Mission Press. 1812.

(4) *A Dictionary of the Bengalee Language*, in which words are traced to their origin and their meanings are given, in 2 vols. Vol. I, 1815 (Vol. II, 1825). Vol I reprinted in 1818. The second volume is in 2 parts All Bengali-English.[1] Printed at the Mission Press. Serampore.

Scope and importance of Carey's works.

Carey's enthusiasm for Bengali and his patient scholarship are nowhere displayed better than in his industrious compilation of the *Bengali Grammar* and the *Bengali-English Dictionary*. This was indeed the age of grammars and dictionaries, and the name of grammarians[2] and lexicographers who, after Carey, followed in the foot-steps of Halhed and Forster, is legion; but none of the works

[1] Rev. Long in his *Return of the Names and Writings of* 515 *Persons connected with Bengali Literature* (p 125) mentions among Carey's works a treatise or pamphlet called *Letter to a Laskar*. It seems that the *Address to a Laskar*, which was written not by Carey but by Pearce of Birmingham, was translated by Carey (see E. Carey, *op. cit.* p. 463; also Murdoch, *Catalogue of Christian Vernacular Literature of India*, p. 5) Carey also wrote other missionary tracts which it is not necessary to mention here.

[2] The first Bengali Grammar by a native grammarian is said to be that by Gaṅga Kiṣor Bhaṭṭachārya, written in the form of a dialogue. It was published in 1816 (Long, *Catalogue*) This date seems to be incorrect. We find the first announcement of this work in the *Samāchār Darpaṇ* (Oct. 3, 1818) from which it would appear, in the first place, that the book was published about 1818; and secondly, that it was not only a grammar but a compendium of miscellaneous information and that the portion dealing with grammar did not relate to Bengali language but that it was an English Grammar in Bengali. See my article in *Baṅgīya Sāhitya Pariṣat Patrikā*, vol. xxiv, p. 154.

of these writers except perhaps Haughton's *Glossary* and Keith's *Grammar* (popularly called Keṭ-Byākaraṇ) obtained the reputation and currency which Carey's scholarly works did. Carey's *Grammar* was composed more than twenty years after Halhed's *Grammar*. Halhed's was indeed a work of merit; but in the interval that had elapsed between its appearance and the institution of public lectures in the Fort William College, it had probably become scarce, and was no longer available for the needs of the students of the College. To Halhed indeed belongs the credit of first reducing to rule the construction of the Bengali language, and Carey must have derived much help from him.[1] But though ostensibly modelled on Halhed's work, Carey's *Grammar* was altogether a new and original contribution to the scientific study of the language; for Carey had an opportunity of "studying the language with more attention and of examining its structure more closely" than had been done before. Whilst acknowledging the aid he had derived from Halhed, Carey observes (1st Ed. 1801): "I have made some distinctions and observations not noticed by him, particularly on the declension of nouns and verbs and the use of participles." In the preface to the second edition (1805) he says:—"Since the first edition of this work was published, the writer had had an opportunity of studying this language with more attention and of examining its structure more closely than he had done before. The result of his studies he has endeavoured to give in the following papers which, on account of the variations from the former editions, may be esteemed a new work". The

Carey's *Grammar*, 1801.

Indebtedness to Halhed and Carey's originality.

[1] E. Carey, *op. cit.* p. 247.

variations alluded to above refer to the alterations and additions, particularly in the declension and derivation of nouns and in the conjugation of verbs, extending the grammar to nearly double its original size. The later editions, however, do not differ materially from the second edition.

Another merit of this *Grammar* arises from the fact that Carey seems to have realised very early that the basis of the vernacular language must be sought in its classical progenitor: and this fact enables him to examine critically the ultimate structure of the language and evolve rigid rules fixing the chaotic colloquialism and dialectal variety of the vernacular into definite forms. A living language, however, can never be regulated by artificial rules borrowed from a dead language, however closely connected they might be with each other: and Carey, in giving full scope to colloquial and temporal variations, shows himself fully alive to this fact. Rules of Sanscrit Grammar can never suffice for the study of Bengali: yet one can never wholly dispense with Sanscrit Grammar in framing a grammar for its vernacular off-shoot. A truly scientific grammar of Bengali must avoid these extremes: and Carey, who had a wonderful knowledge of the vernacular as it was spoken and written as well as of the classical Sanscrit, succeeded to a great extent in steering through the middle path.

The basis of the language and of the grammar.

The *Bengali Grammar* of Carey explains the peculiarities of the Bengali alphabet and the combination of its letters: the declension of substantives, and formation of derivative nouns: inflections of adjectives and pronouns: and the conjugation of verbs. It gives copious lists and

Scope of the book.

descriptions of indeclinable verbs, adverbs, prepositions, etc., and closes with syntax and with an appendix of numerals and tables of weights and measures. The rules are comprehensive, though expressed with brevity and simplicity; and the examples, though derived from only a few of the standard works, are sufficiently numerous and well-chosen. There are many defects and inevitable errors but they are sufficiently obvious and excusable to require any comment and do not materially affect the value of the book. The syntax, however, is the least satisfactorily illustrated part but this defect was fully remedied by a separate publication, originally forming a supplement, printed also in 1801, of *Kathopakathan* or *Dialogues* in Bengali, with a translation into English, comprising a great variety of idioms and phrases in current Bengali. Carey's extraordinary command over colloquial Bengali is nowhere better exhibited. There are, no doubt, occasional lapses and errors of idiom[1] which none but a man born to the language can easily realise, yet the extent and variety of topics, the different situations, and the different classes of men dealt with in these dialogues show not only a minute and sympathetic observation and familiarity with

Kathopakathan or *Dialogues*, 1801.

Its rich vocabulary of current forms and idioms.

[1] Carey, however, was so very careful to ensure correctness in this respect that he writes in the Preface: "That the work might be as complete as possible, I have employed some sensible natives to compose dialogues upon subjects of a domestic nature, and to give them precisely in the natural style of the persons supposed to be speakers. I believe the imitation to be so exact that they will not only assist the student, but furnish a considerable idea of the domestic economy of the country". It will be seen therefore that the authorship of the entire book does not rest with him, but that the dialogues other than those of a domestic nature were his own. But even these surely reflect great credit on him as a scholar of Bengali.

the daily occupations of the people, their manners, feelings and ideas but also a thorough acquaintance with the resources of the language in its difficult colloquial forms. The book is indeed a rich quarry of the idioms (and even of the *slang*, the class or professional shibboleth) of the spoken dialect of Bengal; and in an age of mere or main translation, of tentative accumulation of vocabulary and experimental adaptation of arrangement, its value is very great. But to this book belongs also the credit of making an early and original attempt to give, in a crude semi-dramatic form, a faithful reflection of the social life in Bengal as it existed a century ago. The class of men who are supposed to carry on these dialogues or colloquies ranges from that of a Shahib, a respectable Bengali gentleman, a merchant, a zemindar and a Brāhman priest to that of a peasant, a low class woman, a day-labourer, a fisherman and a beggar. The more regular and measured language of the upper classes is put side by side with the loose style and talk of uncultured women and the lower orders in different situations. Independently of its merit as a help to the acquisition of the language, this work presents in many respects a curious and lively picture of the manner of life led by the middle and lower classes. The faithfulness of this picture is guaranteed by the fact that even in the present day it has not lost all the force and precision of its realism. In his celebrated Sanscrit speech before Lord Wellesley at a public disputation of the College Carey, speaking of his knowledge of the country, said: "I, now an old man, have lived for a long series of years among the Hindoos. I have been in the habit of preaching to multitudes daily, of discoursing

Its picture of social life in Bengal.

Its realism.

with the Brāhmans on every subject, and of superintending schools for the instruction of the Hindoo youth. Their language is as familiar to me as my own. This close intercourse with the natives for so long a period, and in different parts of our empire, had afforded me opportunities of information not inferior to those which have hitherto been presented to any other person. I may say indeed that their manners, customs, habits, and sentiments are as obvious to me as if I was myself a native."[1]

Carey's knowledge of the people.

The colloquies begin with a sketch of the conversations of an English gentleman, his method of hiring servants, giving out orders, his desire of learning Bengali, his talks with his munsi etc. The preponderance of Persian words in these dialogues is thus explained by Carey himself : "A Khansama or a Sirkar, talking to an European (and *vice versa*) generally intermixes his language with words derived from Arabic or Persian and some few corrupted English and Portuguese words". (Preface) The rest of the colloquies deal with the conversations and ideas, mostly of the middle and lower classes of the people of Bengal, living in the remote villages. The colloquies may be conveniently arranged thus under different heads of subjects :—

Scope and arrangement of the work.

(1) Conversation relating to everyday life of middle-class country gentlemen. (2) Talks about land, its cultivation, farming, produce, rent etc. (3) Talks about business matters *e.g.* between a debtor and his creditor etc.

The various topics of conversation.

[1] Buchanan, *op. cit.* Translation of the speech of Carey at p. 168 ; also quoted in Smith, *op. cit.* pp. 167-169 ; also Roebuck, *op. cit.* p. 60.

(4) Conversation "both in friendly and contentious style" between women of various types, their going to market etc. (5) General talks about eating, journeying, taking counsel etc. (6) Conversation among lower classes of people *e.g.* labourers, fishermen, beggars etc.

Of the colloquies under heads (1) and (5) which are the more interesting of the whole group, those entitled "ভদ্রলোকে ভদ্রলোকে প্রাচীনে প্রাচীনে" (A discourse of respectable old people) "ঘটকালি" (An agreement of marriage) "যাজক ও যজমান" (A priest and his customer) and the last colloquy entitled simply "কথোপকথন" (Conversation) on the subject of marriage between two *ghaṭaks* are the best. The conversation of the *ghaṭaks*, although a more subdued picture, would remind one of the *ghaṭaks* in Rām-nārāyaṇ's *Kulīn-kula-sarbasva*. Some specimens of unconscious humour will be found in the measured formal speeches of the priests (in what Carey calls "the grave style") as contrasted with the simple talks of laymen. We give below an extract from the first-named of these colloquies, which throws much light on the social life in the village and at the same time illustrates the more serious style of Carey in these dialogues :—

An extract quoted in the 'grave style'

তাঁহার ভ্রাতুষ্পুত্রেরা কেমন আছেন।

তাঁহারা মহারাজ চক্রবর্ত্তী তাঁহারদের সহিত কার কথা তাঁহারদের প্রতিযোগিতার লোক আমার দেশে নাই।

এবারে কোম্পানীর কার্য্য পাইয়া মহাধনাঢ্য হইয়াছে তাঁহারদের সমান ধনীলোক আমার দেশে চাকরী করিয়া হইতে পারে নাই।

কেবল ধনীও নয় বিষয়ও অনেক করিয়াছে আজি লাগাএদ কমবেস লাকো টাকার জমিদারি করিয়াছে।

সমস্তই ভাগ্যের বশীভূত দেখদিকি তাঁহারা কি ছিলেন এখন বা কি হইয়াছেন। এ আঙ্গুল ফুলিয়া কলাগাছ হইয়াছে।

তাঁহারদের পূর্ব্ব বিবরণ আমরা সমস্তই জানি। মাতাপিতার দুঃখের পরিসীমা ছিল না।

যতক্ষণে বড় ভট্টাচার্য্য কিছু দিতেন তবেই সে দিন নির্ব্বাহ হইত নতুবা হরিমটুক।

এখন ঈশ্বর তাহারদিগকে অতিশয় উন্নত করিয়াছেন ঈশ্বরাধীন কর্ম্ম বড়কে ছোট করিতে পারেন ছোটকেও বড় করিতে পারেন।

আমি চিরকাল দেশছাড়া তাহারদের আহার ব্যবহার কি প্রকার।

তাহারদিগের আহার পরিচ্ছদ ভাল বটে।

নিতান্ত আত্মীয় অন্তরঙ্গ লোকের উপকার করা আছে কিন্তু দানাদি সর্ব্বতোভাবে নাই।

ক্রিয়াকর্ম্ম এই ক্ষণে যেরূপ করিতেছে সে নিন্দিত নয়।

কহ জমিদারি যে করিয়াছেন সে শাসিত কি প্রকার।

জমিদারি কখন ছিল না এই ক্ষণে হইয়াছে কিন্তু শাসন সুন্দররূপ করিতে পারে নাই এ বিষয়ে বিজ্ঞ নয় ইহাতে প্রজালোকেরা সুখ্যাতি করে না।

কহ যেরূপ বড়মানুষ হইয়াছেন তাহার মত চলন কিনা লওয়াজিমা কি মত।

লওয়াজিমা যেমত করিয়াছেন তাহার মত ওঠক বৈঠক নয়।

নিত্যক্রিয়া কিরূপ করেন।

এক প্রহর দশ দণ্ডের মধ্যে স্নান করিয়া পূজা বিশিষ্টরূপ করিয়া জলপান ভোজন করেন কুটুম্ব সাক্ষাৎ যে থাকেন একত্র ভোজন হয় না।

অতিথি সেবা হইয়া থাকে কি না। তাহাতে আমোদ ("reputation"—Carey) কেমন।

অতিথিসেবা করিয়া থাকেন বিশিষ্টরূপে হয় না। আমোদ সুন্দর নাই।

ঈশ্বরসেবা কি ধারা করিয়াছেন।

ঈশ্বরসেবা করেন বটে কিন্তু বিশিষ্টরূপে নয় শিবলিঙ্গ ও বিগ্রহ ও শালগ্রাম সকলি সংস্থাপন করিয়াছেন।

বসৎবাটী কেমত করিয়াছেন।

বাটী চতুর্দ্দিগে চকমিলান করিয়া তিন চারি মহল করিয়াছেন।

শুনিলাম গঙ্গাস্নানে গ্রামস্থ প্রায় সকলেই আসিয়াছিলেন তাহাতে কিরূপ সকলকে তত্ত্ববৃত্তান্ত করিয়াছেন।

ঈশ্বরী গঙ্গাস্নানে গ্রামের প্রায় সকলি আসিয়াছিলেন তাহাতে তত্ত্বাবধারণ বিস্তারিত করিয়াছেন দানাদি বাহুল্য বটে।

সারদীয় পূজা রচনা করিয়া থাকেন।

ঈশ্বর পূজাও দেশের অন্য অন্য লোক যে প্রকার করে তাহার অপেক্ষা বড়।

কমবেশ চারি পাঁচ হাজার টাকা ব্যয় ব্রাহ্মণ ভোজনাদি তিন দিন অন্য অন্য লোকে মিষ্টান্ন খাওয়াইয়া থাকেন বটে।.. .....

কন্যার বিবাহ দিয়াছেন কি না।

বড় কন্যার বিবাহ অষ্টমবর্ষে নৈকষ্য কুলীন আনিয়া দিয়াছেন। পাত্রটি সুশ্রী সুভব্য বটে।

বিবাহের সময় ব্যয় কি মত করিয়াছিলেন ঘটক কুলীনের আগমন কি মত হইয়াছিল তাহারদের বিদায় কিরূপ করিয়াছেন।

কুলীন প্রায় দুই তিন শত ঘটকও পাঁচ ছয় শত আসিয়াছিল। তাহারদের বিদায় যেমত করিয়াছিলেন তাহাতে সুখ্যাতি হইয়াছে।[1]

This is the specimen of the 'graver style', but more colloquial and easy are the dialogues under the heads (2) and (3), although these colloquies, it should be noticed, as well as those between English gentlemen and his servants, are full

More colloquial style

[1] *Dialogues intended to facilitate the acquiring of the Bengalee Language*, by W. Carey D. D. Mission Press 1818 1st Ed. pp. 66-85; 3rd Ed. pp. 36-40. See also 3rd Ed. pp. 108-110 (1st Ed. pp. 208-217) for the description of a marriage and the expenses incurred at the wedding.

of Persian words which are comparatively absent in the domestic talk under other heads of subjects. Business matters have a language of their own ; but Persian for a long time was the court-language and all business matters were transacted in that language. Not only words like মালিক, দস্তকর্জ্জা, খাতিরজমা, একরার, সবুর, মহশুল, তজবিজ, জমিন, নজর which have become almost naturalised in Bengali but even unfamiliar words like তকসির, তরদ্দ বুরা, মাকুল, এলাম, আঙ্গাম, এৎবার, থোড়া, are frequently used. Of the other colloquies, that on "A Landlord and his tenant" ("জমিদার রাইয়ত") too long, however, for quotation here, is the most remarkable as giving a true picture of the relation between the landlords and their tenants. (3rd Ed. pp. 88-108).

Preponderance of Persian words.

The colloquies spoken by the lower orders are bound to be very interesting, but it is to be regretted that these dialogues are very short and not very well-written and their number too is small. The language here must of course differ considerably both in pronunciation and vocabulary from that already quoted. The following short extract will be found illustrative ;—

The language of the lower orders.

তিয়রিয়া কথা।

হাড়ে ভেগো মাচকে যাবি কি না আতিতো কোয়া কোয়া করিছে। মুই ফুকারছি তুই ঘুমাইছিস।

বা। এক কাপকড়ে আইয়াছে। হ্যাঁ ম্যাগ পড়েছে এখন কি জালে যাবাড় সময়। যা চেঁদে তুই মুইতো এখন যাব না। কালি ঢের আতি থাকিতে গিয়াছিনুঁ। যাড় বলে খাবার মাচ পেনুঁ না তাতো আজি ম্যাগ পড়েছে।

হাড়ে ভাই ম্যাঘের ভয়ে মোদের কাম চলে না ত্যাবেতো মাগ ছাওয়ালকে ভাত কাপড় দিমুঁ। তোর বড় দেখি সুকবাসের শড়ীল হইয়াছে।[1]

The colloquies of women are very faithful and realistic, but some of the pictures are too gross and the language sometimes even borders on indecency[2]. The ladies, however, who figure in these colloquies belong, it seems, mostly to the uncultured lower classes: and here and there all Billingsgate seems to be let loose at once. It is true that "women" as Carey says "speak a language considerably differing from that of the men, especially in their quarrels", yet he would be far from right if he supposes that this is the measure of women's talk in Bengal. Quotations from these will not be

The language of women.

Grossness of tone and language.

[1] It is better to append Carey's translation of this passage here.

Fisherman's talk.

Haloo, Bhego, will you go a fishing? 'Tis getting light. I called: You was asleep.

Aye, aye, this is an excuse. Hah; it rains: is it time to go to the nets now? Go you to no purpose. I won't go now. Yesterday I went long before light: by so doing I did not get fish to eat, and to-day it rains.

Yes, brother, my work won't go no by the fear of clouds. Shall I be able to clothe and feed my wife and children thus? I see you have a body formed for ease. (*Dialogues*, 1st Ed pp. 110 et seq; 3rd Ed. pp. 56-57.)

[2] Possibly these dialogues were written by the "sensible natives" whom Carey employed (*vide ante*, footnote p. 136) and who might have misled him. See especially the colloquy headed "মইয়া কন্দল" (Women's Quarrels) beginning with "তুমি কোথায় গিয়াছিলা পাড়াবেড়ানী" (*Dialogues*. 1st Ed. pp 156-164; 3rd Ed. p. 82 et seq.)

welcome but here is one dialogue in the "friendly style" sufficiently harmless and representative wherein the ladies seem to belong the middle class :—

A finer picture.

তোমরা কয় যা।

আমি সকলের বড় আমার আর তিন যা আছে।

কেমন যায় যায় ভাব আছে কি কালের মত।

আহা ঠাকুরাণী আমার যে জ্বালা আমি সকলের বড় আমাকে তাহারা অমুক-বুদ্ধিও করে না।

আলো সকলেই কি একে।

না। তাহার মধ্যে ছোট ছুঁড়ি ভালমানুষের মাইয়া সেইতি আমাকে উপরোধবাদ করে।

তবে তাহারি সাথে তোমার প্রীতি আছে।

প্রীতি আছে বটে। কিন্তু সকলে অসৎ তাহাতে সেও সেই মত হয় বা।

সে এখন ছোট আছে তুই একটুকু আস্থা মমতা করিস তবে সে তোরি কানোড়া হইবে।

আমার কানোড়া হবে সে এমন কানোড়া হবার যোগ্য নয় বাঁশ হইতে কঞ্চি দড়।

তবে যে বলিলি সে কিছু ভাল।

ভাল সে কেমন ভাল আমাকে বড় একটা তুচ্ছ মুচ্ছ করে না।

তবু ভাল কেমন তোর ছাল্যা পিল্যাড়ার সেবা সুশ্রূষা করে।

হাঁ তা বটে। আমার ছাল্যা পিল্যা প্রায় তাহারি কাছে থাকে সে তাহারদিগকে খাওয়ায় ধোয়ায়।

আর আর মাগীরা দিন রাত কচ কচ ঝক ঝক করিতেছেই তাহার কামাই নাই রাবণের চিলুর মত জ্বলিতেছেই। সদা মাথামুড়া খাওয়া আছেই।

তবে কাহারু সাতে কাহার প্রীতি নাই।

প্রায় না প্রীতি কি ভাল মুখে আলাপ ও নাই কেবল মাথামুড়া খাওয়া কাটাঘাটা মাত্র।

ওলো তোর ভাতার কারে কেমন ভালবাসে তাহা বল শুনি।

আহা তার কথা কও কেন এখন আর আমারদের কি আদর আছে নূতনের দিগে মন ব্যতিরেক পুরাতনের দিগে কে চাহে।

তা হউক। তুই সকলের বড় তোর ছাল্যা পিল্যা হইয়াছে।

কালি যে ভাই দুপুর বেলা কচকচি লাগালে মাঝুয়া বেটী তাহা কি বলিব।

কি জন্য কচকচি হইল।

দূর কর ভাই। তাহা কহিলে আর কি হবে লোকে শুনিলে মন্দ বলিবে আমার বাড়ীভরা শত্রু এই জন্য ভয় করি।

বড় বৌ আমার মাথার দিব্বি সত্য করিয়া বল।

কালি দুপুর বেলা ছোট বৌ রান্ধিয়াছিল ইহার মধ্যে আমার ছ্যালা আগে ভাত খাইয়াছিল ইহার মধ্যে মাঝুয়ামাগী আসিয়া কন্দল আরম্ভ করিল।

তোর গো বাড়ীর মাইয়াগুলা কেহ কারু ভাল দেখিতে পারে না।

কি করিব এমত ঠাঁই নাই যে সেখানে গিয়া দশ পাঁচ দিন থাকিলে গায় বাতাস লাগে।

কেন তোর ভাইদের বাড়ী দিন কত যা না কেন।

তাহারদের বাড়ী যাব কি তাহা হইলে তবে ভাইখাকীরদের কাছে রক্ষা আছে। আমার ভাইদের নাম শুনিতে পারে না কেউ। কর্ত্তা যিনি তিনি দ্বন্দ ডাকাডাকির জন্য বাড়ী প্রায় থাকেন না যখন আইসেন তখন গালাগালি তিরস্কার করেন।

তোরদের সংসারের এমত ঐক্য ছিল এখন এমত অনৈক্য হইয়াছে।

মাইয়া দুটার বিবাহ দিতে পারিলে আমি সাতটা শর্ষা দিয়া স্নান করি কুলাই চণ্ডির আগে দড়ো গুয়াপান স্তবচনী পূজা করি মনস্কামনা সিদ্ধ করিলে হয়।

মায়্যার বিবাহের কোথায় ঠাওর হইয়াছে দেশের মধ্যে না বিদেশে দিবা।

ঈশ্বরের মনে কি আছে বুঝিতে পারি না আমার ইচ্ছা দেশের মধ্যে হইলে ভাল হয়।

তোমার যারা সকলে কি বলে মাইয়ার মামা মামী কি বলে পাঁচটার যে মত সেই কর্ত্তব্য।

সে যে হউক। আমি বাড়ী যাই বেলা গেল এখনি গালাগালি দিবে।[1]

This is indeed a fine piece but the *Women's Quarrels* are not so attractive. Critics have found fault with Carey the missionary for giving these latter gross colloquies a place in his book which was intended to be a text-book for young civilian students: but fastidious considerations apart, these dialogues certainly exhibit the true picture of a certain type or class in every society, interesting to the student of the drama, novel, or social history. A strong tendency to objective realism in Carey demanded a *verbatim* reproduction of the language of the people; had he listened to his missionary scruples, the picture, like Johnson's in *Rasselas*, would have been unnatural or imperfect. In this respect Carey has been called, not unwisely or too enthusiastically, the spiritual father of Ṭek-chānd, and Dīnabandhu. That Carey had fine dramatic instincts, which if developed would have borne better fruits, and that he was more than a mere compiler, has been put beyond all doubts by the *Colloquies*

Its intense realism, both in its form and spirit.

The significance of the book. Carey of the *Dialogues* is the spiritual father of Ṭek-chānd and Dīnabandhu.

[1] *Dialogues*, 1st Ed. pp. 148-156; 3rd Ed. pp. 76-82.

which, to the student of Bengali, is more than a mere treatise "intended to facilitate the acquiring of the language".

We have dwelt rather too long on Carey's *Dialogues* but the importance of the book in the light of subsequent history can never be ignored. With regard to the style and language of all these dialogues it should be noticed that here we have, at the outset, the first trace of the opposition between the plain and the ornate styles in prose which is to dominate the rest of its history and reach to a crisis in the opposition of the 'Ālāli style' and the 'Sanscrit College style' of the fifties. We shall have occasion to come back to this point hereafter; but it is to be noted here that this perpetually recurring antinomy in the history of prose style was for the first time clearly posed and definitely worked out by Carey's simple colloquial prose on the one side, and the elaborate diction of the Pundits, especially of Mṛtyuñjay, on the other.

The struggle between the plain and the ornate style first begun.

The best example of a chaste and simple style, more dignified than the colloquial prose of the *Dialogues*, more pure and correct than the prose of Rām Rām Basu or Chaṇḍī charaṇ, yet less affected than the ornate and laboured style of Mṛtyuñjay, is to be found in the *Itihās-mālā* of Carey, which chronologically, however, comes after almost all the important Bengali publications of the Fort William College, except *Prabodh-chandrikā* and *Puruṣ-parīkṣā*, and consequently had the advantage of having got more time for maturing in the meanwhile. It was printed and published in Śrīrāmpur in 1812, and, as its name implies, it is "a collection of stories in the Bengali language, collected

Itihās-mālā, 1812.

from various sources". The book contains 150 stories,[1] derived not only from books of fables and folk-lore, eastern and western, but also from past literature, legends, and history. There are, for instance, besides tales from *Hitopadeś* or *Pañcha-tantra*, the well-known story of Lahanā and Khullanā[2] as well as an anecdote of Akbar[3]. The stories are very amusing and instructive; but the book consists mostly of translation and its interest chiefly lies in its simple homely prose style. It is difficult to select a specimen for space would not allow us to quote more than one. The following extract will be found interesting not only for its style but also for the touch of humour which is rather rare in these early works[4] —

Specimen of its pure and simple style.

বিবাহ হইতে অধিবাস শব্দ যে প্রসিদ্ধ আছে তাহার কথা এই।

একজন ঘটক ব্রাহ্মণ অর্থাৎ বিবাহের যোজক এক বনের মধ্য দিয়া আসিতেছিল সে স্থানে এক ব্যাঘ্র ঐ ঘটক ব্রাহ্মণকে মারিতে উদ্যত হইলে ব্রাহ্মণ ভীত হইয়া ক্রন্দন করিতে লাগিল। ব্যাঘ্র ঘটকের ক্রন্দন দেখিয়া জিজ্ঞাসা করিলেক তুমি কি কারণ কান্দিতেছ ব্রাহ্মণ কহিলেক আমি ঘটক বিবাহের যোজকতা করিয়া ধনোপার্জ্জন করিয়া স্ত্রী পুত্র প্রভৃতির ভরণপোষণ করি আমি মরিলে তাহারা কোনমতে বাঁচিবেক না ইহা শুনিয়া ব্যাঘ্র বিবেচনা করিল আমি ব্যাঘ্রীহীন ব্রাহ্মণ বিবাহের যোজকতা করে পরে কহিলেক হে ঘটক তুমি আমার বিবাহ দেও ব্যাঘ্রী না থাকাতে আমি বড় দুঃখী আছি তুমি আমার বিবাহ দিলে আমি তোমাকে নষ্ট করিব না। ব্রাহ্মণ ব্যাঘ্রের

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[1] Distributed over 320 pages.

[2] *Itihās-mālā*, p. 240.

[3] *ibid*, p. 314.

[4] *ibid*, story 16. pp. 37-40.

বাক্য শ্রবণ করিয়া কহিলেক বিবাহ করা বড় কঠিন অর্থ না হইলে হয় না। ব্যাঘ্র কহিলেক আমি অর্থ দিতে পারি ব্যাঘ্র পূর্ব্বে একজন লোক মারিয়াছিল তাহার অনেক অর্থ ছিল সে সেই সকল অর্থ ব্রাহ্মণের নিকটে উপস্থিত করিলে ব্রাহ্মণ অর্থ লইয়া কহিলেক এই অর্থেতেই তোমার বিবাহ হইবেক কিন্তু বিবাহের পূর্ব্ব অধিবাস করিতে হইবেক সে বড় কঠিন। ব্যাঘ্র কহিলেক যদি আমার বিবাহ হয় তবে অধিবাস যে শক্ত তাহা আমি করিব। পরে ব্রাহ্মণ কহিল আমি গ্রামে গিয়া অধিবাসের সামগ্রী আয়োজন করিয়া আনি। ব্যাঘ্র ঘটককে অনেক অর্থ দিয়া বিদায় করিলেক। ব্রাহ্মণ বাটী আসিয়া চর্ম্মকারের বাটী গিয়া এক চর্ম্মের কল ঘর লইল যাহাতে ব্যাঘ্র বন্ধন হয় ও ঐ বনে লইয়া গেল ব্যাঘ্র সেই স্থানে বসিয়া আছে ব্রাহ্মণ কল সহিত ব্যাঘ্রের নিকটে গিয়া কহিল এই অধিবাসের সামগ্রী ইহার মধ্যে প্রবেশ করিয়া চারি দণ্ড শয়ন করিতে হইবেক। ব্যাঘ্র বিবাহের আহ্লাদে ঐ কলের মধ্যে শয়ন করিলেক। ব্রাহ্মণ কলের দ্বারা বন্ধন করিয়া অনেকে একত্র হইয়া ঐ কল সহিত ব্যাঘ্রকে নদীতে ফেলাইয়া দিলেক। ব্যাঘ্র কলের সহিত নদীতে ভাসিতে লাগিল ইতিমধ্যে এক ব্যাধী দেখিয়া ঐ চর্ম্ম কল ধরিলেক ভিজে চর্ম্ম দন্তে ছিঁড়িয়া ফেলাইলেক। তখন ব্যাঘ্রের সহিত সাক্ষাৎ হইল ব্যাঘ্র ব্যাধীকে দেখিয়া বড় সন্তুষ্ট হইয়া উভয়ের মিলন হইল। ব্যাঘ্র ও ব্যাধী ঐ ব্রাহ্মণের বাটীতে গেল ব্রাহ্মণ দেখিয়া বড় ভীত হইল ব্যাঘ্র ব্রাহ্মণকে বড় ভীত দেখিয়া অনেক প্রকার অভয় বাক্য কহিল তুমি আমার বিবাহের ঘটক আমি তোমাকে তুষ্ট করিতে আসিয়াছি এই কথা কহিয়া ব্রাহ্মণকে অনেক অর্থ দিয়া প্রণাম করিয়া সেই বনে গেল।

Carey's Bengali Dictionary, 1815-1825.

A more laborious and important publication was effected at a later date by Carey in his famous *Dictionary of the Bengalee Language* in two quarto volumes. With hardly a model before him except Forster's *Vocabulary*

or Miller's *Dictionary*,[1] neither of which is hardly complete in itself, Carey achieved this useful and scholarly work after a labour of thirty years and it deserves all the praise that has been bestowed upon it. Though, like his *Grammar*, it hardly belongs to the province of literature pure or proper, this book did much in stimulating the cause of literature and fixing the forms and expressions of the language, and for a long time it continued to be the standard work on the subject. The first volume was published in 1815; but the typographical form adopted being found likely to extend the work to an inconvenient size, it was subsequently reprinted in 1818; a second volume in two parts appeared by 1825. These three volumes comprehend about 2,000 quarto pages and about 80,000 words[2], a number that equally denotes the copiousness of the language and the industry of the compiler. Besides the meaning of words, their derivation is given where-ever ascertainable. This is almost always the case as a great many of the words included are Sanscrit or Sanscritic. Halhed (*Grammar*, Preface. p. xx) had long since maintained "the impossibility of learning the Bengali dialect without a general and comprehensive idea of the Sanscrit" on account of the close and intimate relation between the two. Following him, Carey himself always regarded Sanscrit as "the parent of nearly all the colloquial dialects of India"[3] and "the current medium of conversation amongst the Hindoos, until gradually corrupted by a number of local causes, so as to form the languages at

[1] Said to be published in 1801. (Long's *Catalogue*).

[2] Forster's *Vocabulary* contained only 18,000 words. Carey, however, acknowledges his indebtedness to Forster in the Preface to his *Dictionary*.

[3] Preface to *Sanscrit Grammar*. 1806.

present spoken in the various part of Hindoosthan and perhaps those of some of the neighbouring countries"[1]. Carey, therefore, observes with regard to the materials of his *Dictionary* that "considerably more than three-fourths of the words are pure Sungskrit, and those composing the greatest part of the remainder are so little corrupted that their origin may be traced without difficulty". He also states that he has endeavoured to introduce into the *Dictionary* every simple word used in the language and all the compound terms which are commonly current or which are to be found in the standard Bengali works. It may be thought indeed that in the latter respect he has been more scrupulous than it was absolutely necessary and has inserted compounds which might have been dispensed with, their analysis being obvious and their elements being explained in their appropriate places. The *Dictionary* also includes many derivative terms and privative, attributive, and abstract nouns which, though of legitimate construction, may rarely occur in composition and are of palpable signification. The instances of such, although they swell the dictionary into an inconvenient and costly bulk, evince at the same time the compiler's careful research, his conscientious exactitude, and his unwearied industry. The English equivalents of the Bengali words are well-chosen and are of unquestionable accuracy[2]. Local terms are rendered with that correctness which Carey's knowledge of the manners of the people and his long domestication amongst them enabled him to attain; and his scientific acquirements and familiarity with the subjects of natural history qualified him to employ, and not unfrequently to

[1] Preface to *Bengali Dictionary*, 1818.

[2] See H. H. Wilson, *Remarks on the Character and Labours of Dr. Carey as an Oriental Scholar and Translator.*

devise, characteristic denominations for the products of the animal and vegetable world peculiar to the East. The objection taken to this *Dictionary* on account of its bulk, was subsequently removed by the publication of an abridgement, prepared under Carey's own superintendence by J. Marshman and printed in 1827[1]. Most of the compound and derivative terms were omitted and the publication was reduced to a thick octavo volume. Although this abridgement has the advantage of being more readily consulted, it does not however by any means obviate the necessity of the original which must be regarded as a standard work on the subject until replaced by a better one.

Marshman's abridgement, 1827.

In order to make a final estimate of Carey's position in the history of modern Bengali literature it would be necessary to take into account other writers who flourished in this period and with respect to whom his position must be determined; yet it is hoped that a few words here would not be out of place. It may be observed that Carey never claimed anything for himself save the credit of having worked zealously and assiduously. He said to his nephew Eustace, his future biographer: "If after my removal any one should think it worth while to write my life, I will give you a criterion by which you may judge of its correctness. If he give me credit of being a plodder he will describe me justly. Anything beyond this

Estimate of the labours and character of Carey as a writer of Bengali.

His self-estimate; how far true.

[1] This is in 2 vols. The first volume is an abridgement of the preceding *Dictionary* of Carey (Bengali-English); the second is a Dictionary, English and Bengali, compiled by J. C. Marshman. 1st Ed, vol. I, 1827: vol. II, 1828; 4th Ed. 1847.

will be too much. I can plod. I can persevere in any definite pursuit. To this I owe everything[1]." There is indeed some truth in this self-estimate but the modesty of the scholar precludes him from ascertaining the true value of his life's work. A plodder he was but how very few can plod in the way he did; and this self-derogatory epithet is not the last word to characterise his many-sided activity.

It cannot be denied at the outset that Carey had a clear, vigorous intellect; he was a man of no ordinary powers of mind: capable of strenuous and enduring application; many-sided, his tastes were varied and his attainment vast. But, even admitting all this, it must be observed that he had no imagination, no philosophic insight, no splendid native endowments of any sort. Hardly any of his writings can be strictly called a work of genius. He modestly introduces himself in the Preface to his *Dialogues* as a mere compiler, one who paves the way and leads the student to the higher classical works in the language. "The great want of books" says he "to assist in acquiring this language, which is current through an extent of country nearly equal to Great Britain, which, when properly cultivated, will be inferior to none in elegance and perspicuity, has induced me to compile this small work: and to undertake the publishing of two or three more, principally translations from the Sungskrit. These will form a regular series of books in the Bengalee, gradually becoming more and more difficult, till the student is introduced to the highest classical works in

Whether he was a mere compiler and translator.

[1] E. Carey, *op. cit.* p. 623; also quoted in Dr. Culross's *William Carey*, p. 5.

the language". This was his main object in writing Bengali books: he was never inspired by any literary enthusiasm or artistic impulse of creation. His language and his interests are perfectly definite and practical; there is hardly any touch of elevation or attempt at fine writing anywhere. That he was capable of better things, is, as we have already pointed out, obvious from his *Dialogues*: yet even this work was meant chiefly as a text-book, and as such it hardly afforded many opportunities for the display of his inherent literary powers. Most of his other writings consists of translation or compilation. But, although even in translation a capable artist has scope for his originality, in Carey's case the translations may be suspected to be pretty closely copied from the texts: there is no native literary aspiration to be free and original. Yet, after all is said, it must be admitted that whatever talent could achieve without genius, Carey did accomplish. If he wrote no great imaginative work, he at least prepared the way for the writing of such. We need not lament over the want of originality so conspicuous in his writings: for in the special circumstances it makes far more for his honour than for his depreciation. His literary work was inspired not by any desire of fame nor by any need of satisfying a peremptory personal craving to write, but wholly and solely by the wish of what he thought to be benefitting the people, of doing something that might help the country out of the slough of decadence into which it had been plunged by centuries of foreign rule, least favourable to the development of national life or literature. To this end, it would have been not merely presumptuous but, in the circumstances and the

Want of originality and creative power.

The value and significance of his translation.

time, positively silly to have attempted original composition which was likely to be little read and little understood.

His place in Bengali literature.

What then is his place? He had no originality as a worker in literature and no creative power. But he was a good reproducer of knowledge; and as an educator of the nation, his work and his influence were alike very great.

As an educator.

Discouraged by the authorities and under the Company liable to deportation, he and his colleagues devoted themselves with courage to evangelisation and study of the vernacular. Of this, we shall have occasion to speak more in detail; but it is chiefly for this educational purpose, as an indirect means of evangelisation, that his books were written. They are all rudimentary no doubt but to them belongs the merit of first reducing to a system the chaotic colloquialism of the Bengali tongue. Knowing full well that the literature of a nation in the long run must be of indigenous growth, he at once pressed into service Bengali scholars and writers. By his own exertions as well as by those of others which he instigated or superintended, he left not only the students of the language well provided with elementary books, but supplied standard compositions in prose for the native writers of Bengali, and laid the foundation of a cultivated prose style and a flourishing literature throughout the country. It cannot indeed be said that Carey and his colleagues have "raised Bengali to the rank of a literary dialect" as the Jesuits of Madras are said to have done to the language of the South.[1] None

As a writer and a centre of influence.

[1] Hunter, *Indian Empire*, p. 364. In the same strain Smith, the enthusiastic biographer of Carey, says "for the Bengali-speaking race, William Carey created a literary language a century ago." (*op. cit.* p. 186). *Vide ante* p. 61.

of the works of these missionaries is acknowledged to-day as classical by Bengali authors or Bengali readers; and Bengal had a language and literature of its own long before the missionaries even dreamt of coming out to this country; yet this language had decayed and the literature had been forgotten. It was at this time that Carey came to Bengal. In order to understand what he did for literature we must recollect in what state he had found it when he made the first start. There was hardly any printed book; manuscripts were rare; and all artistic impulse or literary tradition was almost extinct. To Carey belongs the credit of having raised the language from its debased condition of an unsettled dialect to the character of a regular and permanent form of speech, capable, as in the past, of becoming the refined and comprehensive vehicle of a great literature in the future. Poetry there was enough in ancient literature; there was a rudiment of prose too, not widely known or cultivated. But Carey's was indeed one of the earliest attempts to write simple and regular prose for the expression of everyday thoughts of the nation. Other writers contemporaneous with him, like Rām Basu, or Mṛtyuñjay took Persian or Sanscrit as their model and their prose in consequence became somewhat quaint, affected and elaborate; but the striking feature of Carey's prose is its simplicity. It is pervaded by a strong desire for clearness and for use, and by a love of the language itself. It succeeds in being clear and useful and it pleases by force of these elements. It is true that, in spite of all this, Carey must be admitted to have been in literature still a learner, not a master, in any sense; but we must not in our haste forget the pioneer who did the spade-work and paved the way for later glories. Such a pioneer Carey was, and eminently

The character and object of his work.

Carey's prose.

fitted for this task he was by his acquirements as well as by his position.

A friend of Bengali literature.

We have seen that Carey not only wrote in Bengali himself, but with his influence in the Fort William College and reputation as a Bengali scholar, and friend of Bengali writers, he succeeded in inducing many learned Bengalis to the promotion and preparation of good Bengali works. With the aid of the Press at Śrīrāmpur and the collaboration of his colleagues, and in subordination to its special purpose of multiplying copies of the Bengali Bible, he devoted himself to the printing, as we shall see, of the first efforts of native literary talent. From 1801 to 1825 many useful works in Bengali as well as in other languages[1] issued from the Mission Press at Śrīrāmpur, to most of which Carey contributed encouragement and aid. Many of the older Bengali classics were printed at the Mission and made accessible to the reading public. The editions of the *Rāmāyaṇ* of Kṛttibās and the *Annadāmaṅgal* of Bhārat-chandra, published through the zeal of Carey, remained for a long time the standard texts

The Press at Śrīrāmpur and its encouragement of native talent.

[1] In the Appendix to the Tenth *Memoir*, relative to Śrīrāmpur translations (1832) is given a review of the work of the Mission since its commencement. It is shown that two hundred and twelve thousand volumes in forty different languages at a cost of over £80,000 have been issued between 1801 and 1832. The Mission was practically the first in the field in its assiduous study of the different dialects and languages of India. In the Sixth *Memoir* (dated March, 1816) we find 34 specimens of 33 Indian languages given. The whole discussion, Grierson points out (*Indian Antiquary*, 1903, p. 246), is the first systematic survey of the languages of India. Before this, Gilchrist in his *Oriental Fabulist* (1805) had attempted to give a polyglot version of Æsop's fables: but he confined himself to giving specimens only in six languages including the classical Sanscrit and Arabic.

of these ancient works. The promotion of Bengali literature thus effected by the example and impulse of the Press of Śrīrāmpur had been very important, although after 1825 it became less necessary because of numerous printing press springing up in Calcutta for the promotion of indigenous talent. But this alteration of the state of things after 1825 is itself due mainly to the example and influence of Carey and the missionaries at Śrīrāmpur.

Nothing would be more fitting to close this perfunctory estimate of Carey and his works than the high tribute paid to Carey by a competent authority, the celebrated lexicographer and scholar, Rām Kamal Sen. "I must acknowledge here" he says in the Preface to his *Bengali-English Dictionary* (1830), "that whatever has been done towards the revival of the Bengali language, its improvement, and in fact, the establishment of it as a language, must be attributed to that excellent man, Dr. Carey, and his colleagues, by whose liberality and great exertions, many works have been carried through the press, and the general tone of the language of this province has been so greatly raised."

The tribute of Rām Kamal Sen.

CHAPTER VI

The Pundits and Munsis of the Fort William College.

Rām Rām Basu.

After William Carey the next writer of importance, who composed two of the earliest original works in Bengali prose, was Rām Rām Basu, who unlike Carey was a native of Bengal, born at Chinsurah towards the end of the 18th century and educated at the village of Nimteh in the 24 Pergunnahs. He was a Baṅgaja Kāyastha, as is indicated in his *Pratāpāditya Charitra*. To quote Dr. Carey's account, "Ram Bose before he attained his sixteenth year became a perfect master of Persian and Arabic. His knowledge of Sungskrit was not less worthy of note." [1] Such was his reputation for proficiency in these languages that Carey speaks of him admiringly "a more devout scholar than him I did never see [2]." It was this reputation for learning which secured to him not only the post of a Pundit [3] in the College of Fort William

His reputation and his appointment in the College.

[1] *Original Papers of Carey in the care of Serampore Missionary Library*, quoted in N. Rāy's *Pratāpāditya Charitra* p. 185.

[2] Buchanan, *op. cit.* speaks of him as "a learned native"; Marshman, *op. cit.* describes him as "one of the most accomplished Bengali scholars of the day."

[3] Carey says that Rām Basu resigned his appointment through a difference of opinion with the authorities of the College. The date of his resignation however cannot be determined. In Roebuck, *op. cit.* (which was published in 1819) we do not find Rām Basu's name in the list of the Bengali Pundits; on the other hand in Buchanan, *op. cit.* (published 1805) he is described as "a learned native in the College." He must have resigned some where between 1805 and 1818.

in 1801 but also the friendship of Rājā Rām-mohan Rāy, himself a learned man, who is said by Carey to have exercised great influence on Rām Basu's life and character and moulded his literary aspirations. It should be noted here that Rām-mohan, according to some, was the author of the first original prose treatise in Bengali; because his Bengali work on Monotheism (হিন্দুগণের পৌত্তলিকতার প্রতিবাদ) was, according to himself, written when he was only sixteen, and supposing him to be born in 1774, or even, according to others, as late as 1780, the book must have been written before any of the publications of the Fort William College or of the Śrīrāmpur Press issued. But this book meant for private circulation was never printed or published, and Rām-mohan's earliest publication in Bengali was in 1815.

Influence of Rām Mohan Rāy.

It seems therefore that Rām Basu's position as the first native original writer in modern Bengali prose still, after all, remains unassailable. But the influence of Rām-mohan's unpublished work, which Rām Basu is said to have taken as his model, can never be disputed; and it was from the learned Rājā that Rām Basu got the first impulse to write in Bengali. Carey reports to have heard that Rām Rām took the manuscripts of his first work, *Pratāpāditya Charitra* to Rām-mohan, and got it thoroughly revised by him [1].

Rām Basu's position as the earliest original writer of Bengali prose.

[1] Rām Basu's *Attack on Brahmins* (called simply *on Brahmins* in Murdoch, *Catalogue*) as well as his other writings show that he shared many of his views with his friend and master, Rām-mohan. In *Bāṅgālā Sāmayik Sāhitya* (1917), vol. 1. p. 25, this work of Rām Basu on Brahmins is called জ্ঞানোদয় and the date given is 1801. Speaking of this work, Marshman *op. cit.* says that in it "he exposed the absurdities of Hinduism and the pretension of its priest-hood with great severity" and pays him the compliment of

Although the influence of the Rājā was so great on him, Rām Basu was at the same time a great friend of the Missionaries, consorted for many years with Thomas, and was for some time Carey's Munsi.

His works.

From whatever source the impetus might have come, Rām Basu wrote two important original works in Bengali under the patronage of the Fort William College—

1. *Rājā Pratāpāditya Charitra*,[1] 1801, July ;

2. *Lipimālā*, 1802.

Pratāpāditya Charitra 1801.

Pratāpāditya Charitra [2] is said to be "the first prose work and the first historical one that appeared" (Long's *Catalogue*). Its claim to be considered as

having "wielded the power of sarcasm inherent in the language with singular effect." He was almost on the verge of avowing Christianity (See Culross, *op. cit.* pp. 61-62) but was possibly deterred by Rām-mohan. Rām Rām Basu is said to have written also a book called খৃষ্ট চরিত্র in 1801 or the *Immortal History of Christ in Verse* 12 mo. 25 pp. Murdoch, *Catalogue*, however, dates it at about 1810.

[1] This work like *Krṣṇachandra Rāyer Charitra* was written at the inducement of Dr. Carey. Rām Ram Basu helped Carey in his translation of the Bible (see footnote to p. 113. See also *Calcutta Review*, vol. x p 134.) Rām Basu wrote, besides the works mentioned above, a Christian tract called the *Gospel Messenger*, which is also mentioned by Long. The description of this tract is thus given in Murdoch, *Catalogue* ; "Three months later (i.e. June 1800) a Tract was printed under the title of the 'Gospel Messenger,' which was written 'to usher in the Bible' This little book contained a hundred lines in Bengali verse. The writer, Rām Rām Basu, had been convinced of the truth of Christianity through the instruction of Mr Thomas. 'The Gospel Messenger' was the first thoroughly native tract printed in Bengali." (*op cit.* p 4-5) See also Smith, *op. cit.* p. 203 ; Marshman, *Hist. of Seramp. Miss* pp. 131-132.

[2] The title-page says: রাজা প্রতাপাদিত্যচরিত্র। যিনি বাস করিলেন যশহরের ধুমঘাটে। একব্বর বাদসাহের আমলে। রাম রাম বসুর রচিত। শ্রীরামপুরে

the first piece of original prose work we have briefly discussed. As an historical work, too, its place is very high. In the description of it given in Buchanan's *College of Fort William* (1805), it is said to have been "composed from authentic documents" and Rām Basu himself at the beginning of his book says : সংপ্রতি সর্ব্বারম্ভে এ দেশে প্রতাপাদিত্য নামে এক রাজা হইয়াছিলেন তাহার বিবরণ কিঞ্চিত পারস্য ভাষায় গ্রন্থিত আছে সাঙ্গপাঙ্গরূপে সামুদাইক নাহি আমি তাহারদিগের স্বশ্রেণী একেই জাতি ইহাতে তাহার আপনার পিতৃপিতামহের স্থানে শুনা আছে অতএব আমরা অধিক জ্ঞাত এবং আর আর অনেকে মহারাজার উপাখ্যান আনুপূর্ব্বক জানিতে আকিঞ্চন করিলেন এ জন্য যেমত আমার শ্রুত আছে তদনুযায়ি লেখা যাইতেছে।[1] It seems therefore that this work—one of the very few treatises on a little-known period of history—is based upon both authentic history and tradition ; but the learned pundit seems to have taken every precaution to

As the first historical work in Bengali prose.

ছাপা হইল। ১৮০১। *The History of Raja Pritapaditya By Ram Ram Boshoo one of Pundits in the College of Fort William.* Serampore. Printed at the Mission Press. 1802. pp 1-156. Entered with identical date, place of publication and name of the author in the *Catalogue of the Library of the Hon. East India Company* 1845, p. 195. An excellent edition of this work, which had been out of print since the first edition in 1801, has been brought out by Nikhilnāth Rāy under the auspices of the Sāhitya Pariṣat. It is needless to say that I am much indebted for some biographical and other informations to this edition ; but with regard to the extracts quoted, I have carefully compared the text given here with that in the first edition, as I find it in the copy of the work lent to me by the Library of the Board of Examiners. The references are given to both the original as well as to N. Rāy's edition as the latter is more easily procurable. The page-reference given here in the text is, in the first place, to the 1st edition (Library of Board of Examiners) and then to N. Rāy's edition.

[1] রাজা প্রতাপাদিত্যচরিত্র, pp. 3-4 ; p. 1.

make it a truly historical work, as far as possible. Competent critics have pronounced this work to be genuinely historical, in spite of its occasional aberrations due to hasty shifting of gossip and fact. The scanty facts and abundant fancies as to the life of Pratāpāditya are a common-place of history. But leaving aside guess-work and speaking of certainties, modern research has been able to make little additions to what Rām Basu has written a century ago.[1] Whatever might be the value of his historical conclusions, however, we are bound to admit at least that the book evinces a careful historical treatment and a truly historical spirit although the work is not history in the proper sense of the term. This treatment and this spirit were hitherto unknown. There are indeed a few so-called biographical and historical works in ancient Bengali literature, such as *Chaitanya Bhāgabat* or *Chaitanya Charitāmṛta*, but these works, written in verse, are, in tone and subject, more religious than historical, and ostensibly modelled on the ancient *Purāṇas*. It is true that as contemporaneous record of society reflected in them, these works may supply materials to a historian but the works themselves can hardly be called historical. Indeed to Rām Rām we must give the credit of being the first Bengali prose-writer who attempted to write history in the sense in which it is taken to-day.[2] The story is given in a connected

[1] See Nikhil Nāth Rāy's Edition p. 199, where the claim of this work as a piece of history is discussed.

[2] There are occasional touches of exaggeration or fancifulness, peculiar to oriental, especially Persian, writers; but these are pardonable enough (*e.g.* his description of ধূম্রঘাটের পুরী etc). The book, however, was so highly regarded that it was translated from original Bengali into the Marhatta language in 1816 (Roebuck *op. cit.* App. II.,) and re-written by Hariś Chandra Tarkālaṅkār in 1853

and interesting manner, enlivened by visual pictures descriptions, and anecdotes; and Rām Basu's power of representing historical incidents, without being dry or discursive, is undoubted. As a pioneer in the field this is a high compliment indeed. His is the plain narrative style, suited to his work, with little embellishments (except by way of gorgeous descriptions) or suggestiveness, but marked with a certain interesting idiosyncracy of character in spirit and form.

Rām Basu as an historian.

It is not possible to give too many extracts but the following, it is hoped, will illustrate his general manner and powers of description.

An illustrative extract (The flight of Rām-chandra).

এ দিগে ক্রমে ক্রমে কেদার রায় প্রভৃতি ভূইয়ারদিগকে নিপাত করিয়া তাহারদের রাজ্য লইল। আপন তরফের লোক সর্ব্বত্রে নিযুক্ত করিয়া রার্জ্য রার্জ্যের খাজনা আদায়তে প্রবর্ত্ত। তাহারদের মধ্যে কেবল রাজা রামচন্দ্র বাকলাওয়ালা ভূইয়া তাহার রাজ্য কবজ করিল এবং সে পলায়ন করিয়া দেশান্তরি হইল। তাহার বিবরণ এই।

রামচন্দ্র প্রতাপাদিত্যের জামাতা তাহার অধিকারের উপর চড়াই না করিয়া ঠাওরাই কোন কৌশলে দেশ কবজ করে তাহা করিল একটা প্রবন্দে নিমন্ত্রণ দিয়া তাহাকে আনাইল ধুমঘাট নিজ পূরীর মধ্যে তাহাতে খাতিরজমায় থাকিল ভাবিল এখন কাবুর তলে থাকিলেন আবস্তক হইলে ইহাকে সংহার করণের আটক হবেক না আর আর কেদার রায় প্রভৃতি সমস্তকেই নিপাত করিয়া তাহার অধিকার আপন লোক দিয়া শাসন করিলেন।

(*vide poste* p. 171). W. Pertsch, the editor of *Kṣitīś Baṁśāvalī Charitam* (Berlin 1852) alluded to this work but its scarcity even in his day made it difficult for him to obtain a copy and he contents himself by the account of it given in the *Calcutta Review*, xiii. 1850, p. 135.

ইতিমধ্যে রামচন্দ্র ব্যতিরেক আর আর সমস্তই করতল প্রতাপাদিত্য ঠাওরাইলেন এখন রামচন্দ্রের রাজ্যে কবজকরণের আটক হইতে পারে না। মাত্র অখ্যাতি লোকে বলিবেক জামাতার অধিকার কাড়িয়া লইল ইহা না করিয়া যদি উহাকে গুপ্তে সংহার করিয়া মৃত্যুর সমাচার সর্ব্বত্রে দিয়া শোকাচার করিলে পশ্চাত রাজ্য কবজ করণে অখ্যাতি হবেক না। অতএব সেই কর্ত্তব্য।

এই রচণা করিয়া হুকুম হইল অদ্যই কোন ক্রমে গুপ্তে সংহার করহ তাহাকে। বিবেচনা এই হইল। প্রাতে যখন গাত্রোত্থান করিয়া বাহিরে যাবে সেই কালে সাঙ্গত্য ক্রমে গুপ্তে তাহার শিরচ্ছেদন করে।

এই কথা পরামর্শ হইলে অস্ত্রধারি লোক স্থানে স্থানে নিয়োজিত হইল। এ সকল কথা পরম্পর পূরী মধ্যে প্রচার হইলে রাজ কন্যা শুনিয়া উৎকণ্ঠিত দিবাংশে স্বামীর গোচর করিতে পারেন না। এইরূপ চিন্তাতে দিবাগত হইলে সাঙ্গত্যক্রমে স্বামীকে এ সকল বৃত্তান্ত তন্মতে নিবেদন করিলেন। রাজ জামাতা এ সকল শুনিয়া বিস্ময়াপন্ন হইলেন এবং যথোচিত ক্ষুন্ন ভাবিলেন কি ক্রমে এখান হইতে নির্গত হইতে পারা যায়। রাজকন্যা কহেন উপায় কিছু দেখি না ঈশ্বর বুঝি আমার বৈধব্য দসা করিলেন।

রায় বিস্তর চিন্তিয়া কহিলেন তোমার ভ্রাতা উদয়াদিত্যের সহিত আমার যথেষ্ট প্রণয় তুমি তাহাকে এ স্থানে আনিতে পারিলে যদি তাহা হইতে ইহার কোন উপায় হয়। রাজকন্যা স্বামী আজ্ঞানুসারে ভ্রাতা নিকট গমন করিয়া আপন স্বামীর স্থানে গুপ্তে আনয়ন করিলেন রায় সবিনয়েতে বেওরা বিদিত করিলে রাজকুমার চিন্তিত হইয়া কহিলেন ইহার আর উপায় কিছু দেখিতেছি না। কেবল একটা সুগতিক হইয়াছে।

অদ্য এই রাত্রে খুল্লপিতামহের বাটীতে নাচ দেখিবার অনুরোধ আছে তাহাতে আমার যাওয়া আবশ্যক ইহাতে যদিত তুমি কিছু কঠিন কর্ম্মে শক্ত হইতে পারহ তবে আমি এ সঙ্কট হইতে মুক্তা করিতে

পারি। রায় হর্ষ হইয়া কহিলেন কহ কি কঠিন কার্য্য অদ্য আমি যে বিপদগ্রস্ত যে কোন কর্ম্মে আমার উপকার দর্শে তাহাতেই আমি শক্ত। রাজপুত্র কহিলেন তোমার পাল্‌কি কাঁন্দে লইতে হবে না কিন্তু তুমি গতি কর আমার অঞ্চলে পরিচ্ছেদান্বিত হও আমার মশালচির পরিচ্ছদে। তবে দেবতা যাহা করুন।

রায় প্রাণের রক্ষার্থে রাজকুমারের মতাবলম্বি হইয়া সওয়ারির সমিভ্যারে মশাল ধরিয়া প্রস্থান করিলেন এই এই মতে এ দুর্গম হইতে পরিত্রাণ হইয়া অতিদ্রুত আপন আমাত্য সমুদয় নৌকা আরোহিয়া ঐ রাত্রে খোন্তা কাটির নালা মুখল করিয়া মরিচাপ নদিতে নৌকা দিলে প্রফুল্ল হইয়া এককালিন তোব ও বন্দুকের দেহড় ও নাকারা ইত্যাদিতে ডঙ্কা দিলে শব্দানুসারে রাজা প্রতাপাদিত্যে চৈতন্য পাইয়া প্রহরির দিগকে জিজ্ঞাসা করিলেন কি শব্দ শুনা যায়। তর্ত্ত কর। বুঝি রামচন্দ্র প্রস্থান করিল। [1]

In addition to its being the first piece of history in Bengali, the work has an intrinsic interest of its own to the student of literature. The curious style, in which it is written, with its quaintness, its crude orthography and syntax and its tendency towards Persian, has been the subject of much adverse criticism ; but considered in the light of literary history it reveals to us certain aspects of the development of prose style in the beginning of the last century. The writer[2] in the *Calcutta Review* of 1850 characterises this style as a "kind of mosaic, half Persian, half Bengali" indicating "the pernicious influence which the Mahamadans had exercised over the Sanskrit-derived languages of India" : and this view has been endorsed by J. Long who in his *Descriptive Catalogue*

Its style characterised as "a kind of mosaic".

[1] রাজা প্রতাপাদিত্য চরিত্র, pp. 130-35 : pp. 54-56.

[2] The writer was James Long himself. See *Cal. Rev.* 1850, p. 134, Art. "Early Bengali Literature and Newspapers".

(1855) speaks of the book as "a work the style of which, a kind of mosaic, shewed how much unjust ascendancy of the Persian language had in that day corrupted the Bengali". Mahāmahopādhyāy Haraprasād Śāstrī, in one of his lectures, [1] condemned the book as "unreadable" on account of its style. It can not be denied indeed that the style *is* "a kind of mosaic"—a curious admixture of Bengali and Persian—quaint, affected, and involved; and considered from the standpoint of purity, lucidity, or simplicity, its style is the worst that this period has to show in Bengali prose. It is true that Persian words occur more or less in every writing of this period, and we have seen from Carey's *Dialogues* published only a month after the book under review, Persian words preponderated especially in the colloquial language of a certain class of people; but no other publication of this period is so much disfigured by Persian and Urdu words as Rām Basu's *Prātāpāditya Charitra*. The following extracts taken at random will bear out the above statement; যেকালে দিল্লির তক্তে হোমাঙ্ বাদসাহ তখন ছোলেমান ছিলেন কেবল বঙ্গ ও বেহারের নবাব পরে হোমাঙ্ বাদসাহের ওফাত হইলে হেন্দোস্থানে বাদসাহ হইতে ব্যাজ হইল এ কারণ হোমাঙ্ ছিলেন বহুত গোষ্ঠী তাহার অনেক গুনিল (গুলিন) সন্তান তাহারদের আপনারদের মধ্যে আত্মকলহ হইয়া বিস্তর বিস্তর ঝকড়া লড়াই কাজিয়া উপস্থিৎ ছিল ইহাতে সুবাজাতের

Preponderance of Persian.

[1] *Lecture on Bengali Literature in the Present Century* (in Bengali), at the Sabitrī Library (Published in *Bāṅgadarśan*, vol. vii and viii, 1287-88 B. S). He uses the words "অপাঠ্য কদর্য্য" in connexion with this work, which appellations, however, are rather too strong. It is a significant fact that Dr. Yates in his Selection from Bengali Literature of this period (*Introduction to the Bengali Language*, 1847, vol. ii) does not quote a single extract from *Pratāpāditya Charitra*, for its style seems to have been regarded as not worth study or attention.

তহশিল তাগাদা কিছু হইয়াছিল না (p. 6-7 ; p. 2)। সে স্থানে লোক পাঠাইয়া দরোবস্ত জঙ্গল কাটাইলেন ও নদী নালার উপর স্থানে স্থানে পুলবন্দি করিয়া রাস্তা নমুদ করিলেন... .....চতুঃপার্শ্বে গোলাগঞ্জ সহর বাজার নগর চাতর ও বাগ বাগিচা (p. 18 ; p. 7)। পাচ লক্ষ সামন্ত দিল্লি গেদ্দে ছিল সমস্ত আনয়ন করিয়া হুকুম হইল গৌড়ে চড়াই করিতে ও দাউদের শিরচ্ছেদন করিতে (p. 22 ; p. 9)। তোড়রমল এই সমস্ত দেখিয়া নিরোপায়ক্রমে বিমর্শ হইয়া হজুর এৎলা কারণ বেওরা পুরস্তরে আরজদাস্ত করিলে বাদসাহ মহারোষান্বিত সেনাতে সাজনিঘোষণ ডঙ্কা দিতে হুকুম করিলেন (p. 22 ; p. 9)। দাউদ আপনার দরোবস্ত সেনাগণ উত্তর পশ্চিম ভাগে পাঠাইয়া স্থানে স্থানে মুরচাবন্দি করিয়া সতৎ সাবধানে রহিয়াছে (p. 21 ; p. 8)। এথায় বাদসাহি লস্কর সেনাপতি রাজা তোড়রমল ও রাজা ওমরাও সিংহ এই দুই সেনাপতি সর্ব্বসৈন্য লইয়া দাউদের থানা বথানায় রঞ্জিত হইয়া বেগগতি লুট ফশাদ করিতে সর্ব্বত্র জয়ী হইয়া রাজমহলের কেল্লাতে দাখিল হইলেন (pp. 28-29 ; p. 11)। শুবা জাতের কাগজজাতও কিছু পাইলেন না যে তাহাতে এ তিন শুবার উসুল তহশিল সুমার তফশিল ওয়াকিফ হএন (p. 29; p. 12)। ইহাতে দুই ভ্রাতা খাতির জমা হইয়া গেল রাজারদের সহিৎ ও নজর দিয়া সাখ্যাত করিলে তাহারা বিস্তর সম্মান করিল দুই ভ্রাতাকে খেলাত দিয়া খাতিরদারিতে সে দিবস বাসায় বিদায় করিল তাহারদিগকে (pp. 32-32 ; p. 13)। তৎপরে প্রতাপাদিত্য যাইয়া চতুর্থমাসে দিল্লিতে পৌঁছিলে উকিলেরা পূর্ব্বে সমাচার পাইয়া দিব্য এক অট্টালিকা মেরামত করিয়া রাখিয়াছিল তাহাতে বাসা হইল কএকদিন পরে বিস্তর বিস্তর তহফা আদি দিয়া বাদসাহের হজুরে দরপেষ হইলেন (p. 60 ; p.25)

It must be borne in mind, however, that at the time when the first Bengali prose works were written, Persian and Urdu, as the languages of the Court[1] and the market-place, were extensively studied and works

[1] It was abolished as a Court-language in 1836

in those languages were taken as models of composition in Bengali. Sanscrit was chiefly confined to the exclusive class of learned Brāhmaṇs and curious scholars. Not only Persian and Urdu were learnt by the boys at school together with their mother-tongue, but even in ordinary conversation Persian words were extensively used. Six centuries of Mohammedan rule did not affect in any remarkable degree the manners and customs of the people but they succeeded in throwing the vernacular into the shade and strengthening the supreme authority of Persian and Arabic, from whose rich vocabulary the Bengali language had been borrowing ever since. Even up to the time of Rām Mohan, when the tendency to Sanscritised style was gradually growing into favour, the Persian ideal was not wholly discarded. Rām Mohan himself wrote his earliest work in Persian but he was also a profound scholar of Sanscrit and his later Bengali style was therefore more sanscritised. Rām Basu, however, in spite of Carey's tribute to his knowledge of Sanscrit, seems never to have possessed that command over the language which his friend Rām Mohan certainly did. But Rām Basu's mastery over Persian and Arabic, which seem to have been his favourite subjects, was undoubted. Moreover, Rām Basu as we have pointed out, distinctly says at the beginning of his book that he has based his work upon certain historical treatises in Persian. It may be observed that in the description of wars and court affairs, the language of the day could not avoid a certain inevitable admixture of Persian. Rām Mohan's subject-matter was religion, and his text the Sanscrit Śāstras; while Rām Basu's interest, on the other hand, was in history and the Persian manuscripts

How far justifiable.

Rām Basu's mastery over Persian and adherence to Persian originals.

constituted his authorities. As a result, therefore, it was quite natural that in his composition, Persian should have so much influence. Towards the end of *Pratāpāditya-charitra*, however, and in the description of domestic or emotional matters, Rām Basu has avoided foreign aid and turned naturally to Sanscriticised language in order to attain more vernacular ease. In the following passage on the celebrated episode of Basanta Rāy's murder as well as the description of the flight of Rām-chandra quoted above, it will be seen that the number of Persian words are comparatively few :—

রাজা প্রতাপাদিত্য কোনক্রমে হননের ছিদ্র পায় না রাজা বসন্ত রায়ের পিতার সাম্বৎসরিক শ্রাদ্ধের দিবসে অবারিতদ্বার পূর্ব্বাপর থাকে ইত্যাপকাসে রাজা প্রতাপাদিত্য এক দিব্য তলোয়ার সঙ্গোপনে লইয়া যশহর পূরী প্রবেশ করিলে দেখে রাজা বসন্ত রায় স্নান করিতেছেন ইহাতে বেগে গতি করিয়া আইসেন। এই সময়ে খানসামা বলিল রাজাকে মহারাজ রাজা প্রতাপাদিত্য বেগে আসিতেছেন। ইহাতে তিনি ত্রস্ত হইয়া বলিলেন গঙ্গাজল আন। তাহারর্থ গঙ্গাজল নাম তলোয়ার। খানসামা তাহা না বুঝিয়া এক বাটীতে করিয়া গঙ্গাজল উপস্থিত করিল ইহা দেখিয়া বুঝিলেন পরমায়ু এই পর্য্যন্ত। ইতিমধ্যে রাজা প্রতাপাদিত্য অতিবেগে নিকটস্থ হইয়া তাহার শিরচ্ছেদন করিলে মুণ্ড ভূমিতলে পতন হইল ইহাতে অতিশয় কলরব ও হাহাকার শব্দ হইল। (pp. 137-38 ; pp. 57-58).

Moreover, *Pratāpāditya-charitra* was the first attempt at sustained Bengali prose-writing, and with no model before him, Rām Basu had no other alternative than that of writing in the current language, which was in itself a strange admixture of Bengali and Persian, in order that his work might easily appeal to all. What seems quaint and affected to us was quite natural to readers a

Corruption of the popular language.

century ago who were accustomed to such corrupted forms. We must make allowance for all these considerations; but after all is said it cannot be denied at least that the style of *Pratāpāditya* is one of the worst specimens of Bengali prose-writing even for this period.[1]

Lipimālā. 1802

In *Lipimālā*, however, his next work[2] published in 1802, consisting of a collection of letters on various topics, the influence of Persian is almost absent. The Preface to this work in Bengali, indicating its object and plan, will be found interesting—

Its object and plan as explained in the Preface.

স্বষ্টি স্থিতি প্রলয়কর্ত্তা জ্ঞানদ সিদ্ধিদাতা পরব্রহ্মের[3] উদ্দিশ্যে নত হইয়া প্রণাম ও প্রার্থনা করিয়া নিবেদন করা যাইতেছে।—

এ হেন্দুস্থান মধ্যস্থল বঙ্গদেশ কার্য্যক্রমে এ সময় অন্যোন্য দেশীয় ও উপদ্বীপীয় ও পর্ব্বতস্থ ত্রিবিধ লোক উত্তম মধ্যম অধম অনেক লোকের সমাগম হইয়াছে এবং অনেক অনেকের অবস্থিতি ও এইস্থানে এখন এস্থলের অধিপতি ইংলণ্ডীয় মহাশয়েরা তাহারা এদেশীয় চলনভাষা অবগত নহিলে রাজক্রিয়াক্ষম হইতে পারেণ

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[1] This work was re-written in a more popular style by Hariś-chandra Tarkālaṅkār at the instance of Rev. James Long in 1853 and included in the "Bengali Family Library Series" (গার্হস্থ্য বাঙ্গালা পুস্তকাবলী). 2nd Edition 1856. It would be interesting to contrast the styles of these two works written at the interval of 50 years. Hariś chandra's version is reprinted in N. Rāy's edition.

[2] The book gives a clue to its date. There is a couplet in the Preface which shows that it was composed in ভাদ্র ১২০৮. It runs thus :—শতাব্দিত্য বসু বর্ষ ৎ শু শ্রেষ্ঠ মাস। ৎরম আনন্দে রাম করিল প্রকাশ।

[3] This undoubtedly shows according to some critics the influence of Rām-mohan Rāy who taught the worship of "ব্রহ্ম" This influence is also indicated in the present work by its more sanscriticised style.

না ইহাতে তাহারদিগের আকিঞ্চন এখানকার চলন ভাষা ও লেখাপড়ার ধারা অভ্যাস করিয়া সর্ব্ববিধ কার্য্যক্ষমতাপন্ন হয়েন। এতদর্থে এ ভূমীয় যাবদীয় লেখাপড়ার প্রকরণ দুই ধারাতে গ্রন্থিত করিয়া লিপিমালা নাম পুস্তক রচণা করা গেল। প্রথম ধারা দুই তিন অধ্যায় তাহার প্রথমতো রাজাগণ অন্য রাজারদিগকে লেখেন তাহার প্রত্যুত্তরপূর্ব্বক দ্বিতীয় রাজাগণ আপন সচিবলোককে অনুজ্ঞা ও বিধিব্যবস্থাক্রমদান। ইতি প্রথমধারা। দ্বিতীয় ধারা সামান্য লেখাপড়া। সমান সমানীকে গুরু লঘুকে এবং লঘু গুরুকে প্রভু কর্ম্মকরকে এবং অঙ্কমালা এইমতে পুস্তক লেখা যাইতেছে। ইহাতে অন্যোন্য বিদ্বান লোকের স্থানে আমার এই আকাঙ্ক্ষা যে যদি আমার রচিত এই পুস্তেকের মধ্যে কদাচিতক্রমে কশ্চিত দোষ হইয়া থাকে তাহা অনুগ্রহপূর্ব্বক দৃষ্টিমাত্রে নিন্দামদে মত্ত না হয়েন এ কারণ কোন লোক দোষ ভিন্ন হইতে পারে না।[1]

Description of the book.

The letters, however, are not all on business matters or domestic subjects but some of them are in reality discourses on some religious, historical or legendary topics of interest. For instance, in the letter of one King to another we have, among other things, a discourse on the death of Parīk-it with a moral on the impotence of human will; in the letter of a King to his subject, an account of Dakṣa-yajña:

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[1] লিপিমালা পুস্তক। রামরাম বসুর রচিত। শ্রীরামপুরে ছাপা হইল। ১৮০২। *Lippimala or the Bracelet of Writing being a Series of Letters on Different Subjects by Ram Ram Boshoo, one of the Pundits in the College of Fort William.* Serampore. 1802. pp. 1-255. Also entered in the *Catalogue of the Library of the Hon. East India Company*, p. 295, with identical date and place of publication and name of the author. In Buchanan *op. cit.* it is described as "an original composition in Bengali prose in the epistolary form" and in *Primitae Orientales* as "Letters on business in the Bengali Language intended to facilitate transactions with the natives".

a son writing to his father gives a description of Nabadwīp and Chaitanya; a father instructs his son in the Paurāṇik account of Nārad and Parbat or of the descent of Bhāgīrathī; a teacher writing to his pupil answers some of the latter's questions about Rāban and the legendary account of Badyanāth. This work is really, as Buchanan describes it (*op. cit.* p. 228) "an original composition in Bengali prose in the epistolary form". All these descriptive letters are indeed interesting both in form and matter, but it is not possible to give here more than one quotation, on account of the length of the letters:—

An original composition in Bengali prose in the epistolary form.

রাজা চাকরকে।[1]

Illustrative extracts:

(1) A description of Daksa and his Sacrifice.

অথ বিবরণঞ্চ বিশেষ তোমার ও অঞ্চলের মধ্যে মহাপীঠ জ্বালামুখ যে অতি চমতকৃত স্থান শুনিলাম সেখানকার সেবাদি এখন পূর্ব্বমত হয় না তোমার বড় একটা মনোযোগ সে বিষয় প্রতি নাই এ বড়ই বিরুদ্ধ কথা আমি বুঝি তুমি তাহাতে জ্ঞাত নহ অতএব সে বিবরণ লেখিতেছি মনোযোগ করিবা। মহাদেব বিবাহ করেন দক্ষের দুহিতা মহাশক্তি অবতীর্ণা দক্ষের গৃহে তাহার নাম সতী। দক্ষ মহাব্যক্তি প্রজাপতি ব্রহ্মার মানসপুত্র শব (শিব) তাহার যামাতা বটে কিন্তু ইনি অনাদি কত কোটি ব্রহ্মা ইহার আজ্ঞাবহ তাহাতে দক্ষ কোন ব্যক্তি তাহার পূর্ব্বসাধনাক্রমে মহাশক্তি ভগবতী তাহার কন্যারূপে অবতীর্ণা হইলেন সেই কথা মহাশক্তি তিনি মহাদেবের শক্তি। মহাদেব দক্ষকে শ্বশুরভাবে প্রণাম করেন না ইহাতেই দক্ষ মহাদেবের প্রতি আনন্দিত কখন নহেন বরং কোপিত (কুপিত) এবং কখন কুৎসা বাক্য মহাদেবের বিপরীতে কহেন।

[1] লিপিমালা, প্রথম ধারা; pp. 107-116. Some verses are here omitted at the beginning.

এই মত কতক কাল গত হয়। এক সময় ভৃগু মহামুনি যজ্ঞে ত্রিভুবণ নিমন্ত্রণ হইলে সমস্ত দেবগণের আগমন দক্ষ প্রজাপতি ইত্যাদি সমস্তই সভাস্থ এইকালে মহাদেবের আগমনে সকলেই উত্থান করিয়া অভ্যর্থনা করিলে প্রজাপতি দক্ষ অহঙ্কারে অহঙ্কৃত হইয়া মহাদেবের প্রণাম না করাতে উত্থান করিলেন না এবং আলাপও না করিয়া অন্য লোকের সহিত শিবনিন্দায় প্রবর্ত্ত সেই হইতে দক্ষের দ্বেষ বিদ্বেষ এবং শিবনিন্দা সদা পরে দক্ষ মহাকোপে নিজালয় যাইয়া আপনি যজ্ঞারম্ভ করিলেন বিবেচনা এই যে আমার যজ্ঞে মহাদেবের নিমন্ত্রণ করিব না ইহাতেই তাহার অপমান হইবেক এই মতে যজ্ঞারম্ভ করিয়া সমস্ত আহ্বান করিলেন মহাদেব তাহার যামাতা তাহার কন্যা মহাশক্তি সতী শিবের ঘরণী তথাচ তাহার প্রতি দৃষ্টি না করিয়া রোষযুক্তে সমস্তই বিস্মৃতি কন্যা কি যামাতা কাহাকেও নিমন্ত্রণ করিলেন না। এই মতে দক্ষের যজ্ঞ হইতেছে ইতিমধ্যে সতী পিতৃগৃহে উৎসব শুনিয়া উৎকণ্ঠ চিত্ত হইয়া অত্যন্ত কাতরা সতী নিবেদন করিতেছেন মহাদেব প্রভো পিতৃগৃহে মহোৎসব আমার চিত্ত একান্ত ব্যাকুল হইয়াছে পিতৃগৃহে যাইতে ইচ্ছা দেখ প্রাণনাথ চিরকাল গত হইল মঙ্গল সূত্র করে তোমার ঘরে আসিয়াছি পরে কখন পিতৃগৃহে যাই নাই এবং মাতাপিতাকে দেখি নাই আমি আমার মাতার কন্যা মাতা আমাকে বড় ভাল বাসেন আমিও সেই মত আমার ইচ্ছা পিতৃগৃহে যাইতে তুমি আজ্ঞা কর (some verses omitted here)। একথা কহিয়া মহাদেবের চরণে ধরিয়া সাধনা করিলে মহাদেব বিমর্ষ চিত্তে কহিতেছেন শুন তোমার পিতা পাষণ্ড আমাকে মানে না দেখ সে আমাকে অমান্য করিবার নিমিত্ত আমাকে নিমন্ত্রণ করিল না বিনা নিমন্ত্রণে তুমি গেলে সন্মান পাবা না এবং আমার নিন্দাতে তোমার দুখ হইবেক পশ্চাত তাহার বারণ হইবেক না। অতএব অনিমন্ত্রিত স্থানে যাওয়া উচিত নহে। সতী কহিতেছেন প্রাণনাথ আপনার মাতা পিতার নিমন্ত্রণ অনিমন্ত্রণে কি হয় তাহারদের কাছে পুত্র কন্যার সন্মান অসন্মান কি আমার পিতা আমাকে বড়ই ভালবাসেন আমি বুঝি আমার অসন্মান করিবেণ না সতী যাওনের

উদযুক্তা নিতান্ত শিবাজ্ঞা না নহিলে সতী ক্ষিপ্তমানা রোদন করিতে করিতে মহাক্রোধেতে ক্রোধিতা হইয়া পদব্রজে গতি করিলে মহাদেব নন্দি মহাকাল সিব (শিব) সেবককে আজ্ঞা করিলে মহাকাল মহাযান লইয়া পশ্চাতবর্ত্তিতা করিয়া কতক দূরে গেল দেবী সে যানারোহণে দক্ষালয় উপস্থিতি প্রসতী(প্রসূতী)সতী কন্যাকে দৃষ্টমাত্রেই প্রেমানন্দে পুলোকিত হইয়া গদগদ চিত্তে যাইয়া কন্যার মুখচুম্বন করিয়া ক্রোড়ে করিয়া নৃত্য করিতে লাগিলেন এইমতে প্রেমাশক্ত সতীও মাতাকে প্রণাম করিয়া আর আর সমস্ত ভগিণী ও অমাত্যগণকে সম্ভাষ করিয়া যজ্ঞ স্থানে পিতার নিকটে যাইয়া প্রণাম করিলে দক্ষ তাহাকে দেখিবা-মাত্রেই হরকোপে কোপিত হইয়া শিবনিন্দায় প্রবর্ত্ত হইল। কহিল কন্যে তুমি কিমর্থে এখানে আসিয়াছ তোমার স্বামী ভূতের পতি শ্মশান মসানে তাহার অবস্থিতি হাড়মালা গলায় সাপ লইয়া তাহার খেলা বাদিয়ার বেশ তোমার কপাল মন্দ অতএব এমত ঘটনা তোমাকে হইয়াছে আমি তাহাকে নিমন্ত্রণ করিলাম না। এ দেবসভা আমি ব্রহ্মার পুত্র বাদিয়ার নিমন্ত্রণ দেবসভায় হইতে পারে না। সতী কহিলেন পিতা এমত কুৎসা মহাদেবের প্রতি কহ কেন মহাদেব দেব-দেব ব্রহ্মা বিষ্ণু ইত্যাদি যাহার পদযুগে শরণাগত যে হর মহাবীর ত্রিপুরাসুরকে সংহার করিলেন যে হর কালকূট পান করিয়া সৃষ্টি রক্ষা করিলেন তাহাকে কুৎসাবাক্য তোমা ব্যতিরেক কেহ কহে না তুমি এ অনুচিত ক্রিয়া কেন কর। নন্দি কহিল দক্ষ নিন্দার প্রতিফল পাইবা যে মুখে শিবনিন্দা করিলা তাহা তোমার নাশ হইয়া ছাগল বদন হইবেক এ সকল বাক্যে দক্ষ পুনর্ব্বার শিবনিন্দা করিতে প্রবর্ত্ত হইলে সতী মহাক্রোধে উত্থান করিয়া কহিতেছেন পিতা সকলের উপযুক্ত গুরুনিন্দা-শ্রবণে লোক নিন্দকের শির ছেদন করিবেক নতুবা নিজ প্রাণত্যাগ করিবেক কিম্বা সে স্থান ত্যাগ করিবেক আমি আপন প্রাণ ত্যাগ করিব তোমার আত্মজা তনু আর রাখিব না এই কহিয়া বসন আটিয়া পরিয়া যাইয়া মধ্যস্থানে বসিয়া শিবরূপ ধ্যানে প্রাণত্যাগ করিলেন। সভার মধ্যে দানাগণে কোলাহল করিলে দক্ষ তাহারদিগকে মারিয়া

খেদিয়া দিল। নন্দি দানাগণ সমুদায় লইয়া রোদন করিতে করিতে শিবসাক্ষাত নিবেদন করিবামাত্রেই মহাদেব ক্রোধাবিষ্ট শিবের লোমাঞ্চিত হইতে হইতে মহাক্রোধাবেশ কালান্তকানল সম হইয়া মস্তক হইতে এক জটা ছেদন করিয়া ফেলিলেই তাহাতে মহাবীর বীরভদ্র উতপন্ন হইলেন বীরের মস্তক গগনে স্পর্শ করিলেক মহাদর্পবান বীর দুই চক্ষু রক্তবর্ণ সদা ক্রোধযুক্ত জন্মিবামাত্রেই করপুটে নিবেদন করিলেন দেব-দেব আমি কি কর্ম্ম করিব। শিব কহিলেন দক্ষকে সংহার করহ এবং নষ্ট কর তাহার যজ্ঞ আজ্ঞানুসারে বীর সাতকোটি দানা সহিত সজ্জবান হইয়া ক্ষণমাত্রেই দক্ষালয় উত্তরিয়া নখেতে দক্ষের ছেদন করিয়া যজ্ঞকুণ্ডে সমর্পণ করিলেন এবং দানাগণে প্রস্রাব করিয়া যজ্ঞকুণ্ড পরিপূর্ণ করিল ব্রাহ্মণকে পুথির রজ্জু দিয়া কর বদ্ধ করিয়া নানা মত দুর্নীতি করিল কাহার শ্মশ্রু উৎপাটন করে কাহার দন্ত ভাঁগিয়া ফেলে এই মত অবস্থা সকলকে করিয়া যজ্ঞ নাশীয়া যাইয়া নিবেদন করিল চন্দ্রচূড়ের সন্নিধানে। পরে মহাদেব সতী অঙ্গ দর্শনার্থে দক্ষের ভবনে উপস্থিত হইয়া সতীর মৃতাঙ্গ মস্তকে করিয়া নৃত্য করিতে প্রবর্ত্ত এই মতে মহাদেব নৃত্যে পৃথিবী ভারাক্রান্ত হইয়া আর সহিষ্ণুতা করিতে পারিলেন না ব্যস্ত সমস্ত হইয়া ব্রহ্মার গোচর নিবেদন করিলে ব্রহ্মা কহিলেন বিষ্ণু ব্যতিরেক ইহার উপায় আমাদিয়া কিছু হইতে পারে না। পরে বিষ্ণুর স্তব করিয়া কহিলেন প্রভো পৃথিবী আর ভার সহিতে পারে না এই মতে ব্রহ্মা বিষ্ণু সেই যজ্ঞস্থানে যাইয়া বিবিধ প্রকারে মহাদেবের স্তব করিয়া বিষ্ণু চক্রেতে সতী অঙ্গ ছেদন করিতে করিতে সামুদায়িক ছেদন হইয়া খণ্ড খণ্ড হইয়া পতন হইল। সাকল্যে একান্ন ভাগ হইয়া একান্ন স্থানে পতন হইল সেই একান্ন স্থান হইল পৃথক পৃথক এক এক পীঠস্থান তাহাতে মহাশক্তির এক এক রূপ এবং এক এক ভৈরব অধিষ্ঠান চুড়ামণি তন্ত্রে তাহার বিশেষণ গিয়াছে অতএব এমত মহাস্থান তাহার সেবাচর্য্যা প্রকৃত মত করিবা তাহার ইত্যাদির উপর অতিক্রম করিবা না। সাবধান ইতি।

(2) Business letters

But the language of the strictly business letters are not so commendable and the contrast is noticeable. We select here two characteristic specimens even at the risk of being lengthy.

(১) লঘু পোষ্য গুরুকে।[1]

প্রণামা বিজ্ঞাপনঞ্চৈ তদ্বিশেষেঃ তবাশিষ অত্রানন্দ পরং। ওথানকার সমাচার অনেক দিবস না পাইয়া একান্ত ভাবিত ছিলাম এখন শ্রীজয়-গোপাল ঘোষের হাতপাত্র (পত্র) পাইয়া সমস্ত সমাচার জ্ঞাত হইয়া নিশ্চিন্ত হইলাম। লিখিয়াছ আপনকার কন্যার বিবাহের সম্বন্ধ শ্রীযুত রাজনারয়ণ (নারায়ণ) রায়ের পুত্রের সহিত হইয়াছে তাহার কুলমর্য্যদা (মর্য্যাদা) এক-

of a domestic nature.

শত টাকা দিতে হইবেক এ সম্বন্ধ ভাল বটে কিন্তু টাকার সাংগত্য বৃহত ব্যাপার এইক্ষণে তাহার সংস্থান কি একশত টাকা পণ দিতে হইবেক তদ্ভিন্ন আপনারদের ব্যায় তিন চারি শত টাকা ন্যূনে হইতে পারিবেক না তাহার সকল সঙ্গতি এইক্ষণে হইতে পারিবেক না। আমার এখান হইতে একশত টাকার সুসার হইতে পারিবেক ইহার অধিক কপদ্দক হইবে না বক্রি চারশত অন্য কোন স্থানে হইতে সঙ্গতি করিতে পার এমত স্থান আমি দেখিতে পাই না অতএব সুতরাং এ সম্বন্ধ এইক্ষণে হইতে পারিল না তবে যদি কোন স্থান হইতে টাকার সাংগত্য করিতে পরেণ (পারেন) তবে প্রবর্ত্ত হইবেন পশ্চাত এ টাকা আমি পাঠাইয়া দিব তাহার ভাবনা কিছু করিবা না। শ্রীযুত রাজা মহাশয় আদ্য তিন দিবস হইল ফলানা পরগণায় যাত্রা করিয়াছেন আমিও দুই এক দিনের মধ্যে যাত্রা করিব সে স্থানে যাইয়া কার্য্যে না প্রবর্ত্ত হইলে টাকার সকল সাংগত্য কি প্রকারে হয় কিন্তু পশ্চাত হওনের বাধ হইবে না যদি এ সম্বন্ধ মাসেক দুইমাস পরে হয় তবে কোন ব্যামোহ হয় না শ্রীযুত কৃষ্ণ রায় মহাশয়কে লিখিতেছি এ সম্বন্ধ এইক্ষণে না হইয়া পশ্চাত আগ্রহায়নাদিতে হয়

[1] লিপিমালা, দ্বিতীয় ধারা, pp. 163-166

তিনি এমত করিয়া দিবেন। শ্রীযুত রামসুন্দর বসুজাকে আশ্বীনাদিতে সে স্থানে পাঠাইবেন এক আদ কার্য্য অবশ্য করিয়া দিতে পারিব আমাকে সাহেবের নিতন্ত (নিতান্ত) অনুগ্রহ আছে ইহাতে যখন যাহা সাহেবকে কহি তাহা প্রামাণ্য করেন কার্য্য অতি বড় হইয়াছে ইহাতে যদি কিছু কাল এই কার্য্য নির্বিঘ্নেতে থাকিতে পারি তবে ঈশ্বরেচ্ছা যথেষ্ঠ লোকের প্রতিপালন হইতে পারিবে। সংপ্রতি এক কার্য্য উপস্থিত আছে বড় মন্দ নহে বসুজাকে যদি শীঘ্র পাঠাইতে পারেণ তবে ইহাতেই প্রবর্ত্ত করিয়া দিতে পারি নতুবা ঈশ্বরীপূজার সময় আমি বাটী আসিব সাক্ষাত সমস্ত কহিয়া শুনিয়া পরামর্শপূর্ব্বক যাহা হয় করিব কিন্তু ইহার মধ্যে যদি কোন আবশ্যক হয় তবে আপনি এ পর্য্যন্ত আসিবেন বিশেষ বিদিত হইয়া যাহা কর্ত্তব্য তাহার চেষ্টাচরিত্র করা যাইবেক কিম্বা আর কোন কৌশলে কার্য্য চলে তবে তাহাই করিব। শ্রীযুত রামগোবিন্দ রায় মহাশয় এখানে আসিয়াছিলেন অদ্য দুই দিবস হইল বারাণশী প্রস্থান করিয়াছেন তাহার পত্র এখানে ছিল তাহা পাঠাইতেছি শীঘ্র তাহার বাটীতে পাঠাইয়া দিবেন আমি তাহাকে একশত টাকা পথি ব্যায় নিমিত্ত দিয়া শ্রীযুত রামানন্দ বাবুর সহিত পাঠাইয়াছি পাটনা পর্য্যন্ত সচ্ছন্দ পৌঁশিতে পারিবেন সেখান হইতে বাবু সাতি সঙ্গতি করিয়া দিবেন সেজন্য কোন ভাবনার বিষয় নহে। এ সকল সমাচার তাহারদিগের বাটীতে আপনি যাইয়া বিশেষ বিশেষণ করিয়া কহিবেন বাটীর কেহ ব্যস্ত না হয়েন যাতায়াতে মঙ্গলাদি লিখিবেন। কিমধিকমিতি।

(২) রাজা অন্য রাজাকে।[1]

ইদানীন্ত পবিত্রপুর পরগণায় আপনকার পিতামহ বাপীখননেতে দৈবক্রমে কতগুলি ধনপ্রাপ্ত হইয়াছিলেন। তখন রাজাধিরাজ তার প্রতি

[1] লিপিমালা, প্রথম ধারা, pp 32-37. Some verses are omitted at the beginning. The extracts contain numerous *disjecta membra poetae*. To this letter there is an equally strong reply which want of space forbids us to quote.

মনোযোগ করিলেন না কিন্তু হিরামন মাত্র ধন প্রাপ্যকে আক্রমণ করিয়াছিল। এপর্য্যন্ত প্রসঙ্গ হইলে তাহার বারণ হইল তথাচ সে ব্যক্তি বহুমতে মন্ত্রীগণের মনোরঞ্জনা করিয়া স্বপদে স্থায়ী হইল। সেই

of a political nature.

ধনোপলক্ষ্যে তাহার পুত্র কএকজন সেনা সংগ্রহ করিয়া শিরসী পরগণার রাজা নিঃসন্তান বিয়োগ হইলে তাহার কিঞ্চিত অধিকার কার্য্যক্রমে সেনার প্রতারণাবশে অন্যায় ক্রিয়া করিয়া তিঁহ অধিকার করিয়াছিলেন। পিতা হইতে পুত্র ভাগ্যবন্ত ও ক্ষমতাপন্ন ছিল বটে তথাচ এই দ্বারের অপেক্ষিক কখন অহঙ্কারে মত্ত হইতেন না। এবং অন্যের হিংসাহীন ছিলেন এখন শুনি আপনি দৈবপরাক্রান্ত লোক দান শৌর্য্য কীর্ত্তি বীর্য্য রাজ্য সম্পদে মহা অহঙ্কৃত এবং দেবীসীমার চর যাহা চিরকালাবধি এ মহারাজ্যভুক্ত শিরসীর সহিত তাহার কোন অংশাংশী নাই তথাচ আপনকার ইচ্ছা নিজ পরাক্রমে তাহা অধিকার করেণ একি আশ্চর্য্য ভাল ভাল এও ভাল আপনকার এমত এমত পরাক্রম হইল এ একটা আনন্দের বিষয় বটে কিন্তু শুন কহি অবধান কর একি তুমি কোন মানুষ যে তুমি কটক পাঁচনী কর এ অঞ্চলের উপর এ তোমার কি প্রকার ইতর বিবেচনা কোথা শুনিয়াছ শুনি আহারে শার্দ্দূল স্থকিত হও। এ সামান্য বিষয় প্রযুক্ত এখানকাব কোপের বাহুল্য হয় না শৃগালের গর্জ্জনে কেশরী নাহি রোষে যদিতু হইল তবে তোমার কি গতিক হইবে কোথায় যাইবা তোমার সহায় বা কে এবং রক্ষা বা কে করিতে পারে। এখানকার ক্রোধ যদি হয় তবে প্রতি ইন্দ্রসখা করিলেও না পাবে রক্ষা বৈরিদম্য সেনা মোর যদ্যপি কোপে সসৈন্যেতে সংহার করিবে। সকুটুম্বে সাবধান আপনার পিতৃপিতামহের সুখ্যাতিতে সুখ্যাতান্বিত হইয়া কোন ক্রমে দিনপাত করিতেছ ইহাতে বিরস কেন হয় এখানকার সহিত প্রতি-যোগিতা করিয়া তুমি কি স্থির করিবা। নিসদাধিপ রাজা বলবন্ত রায় যাহার অসঙ্খ্যা সেনা এবং দর্পমান কত বড় তাহার পরাক্রমের সীমা কি যমসম বৈরী হৈলে দৃষ্টে করে ভেদ। যাহার রাজ্য পঞ্চবিংশতি দিবসের পথবিস্তার সেনার কোলাহল সিন্ধুগর্জ্জনপ্রায় এমত মহারাজা

নরপরী নগরের আশে যাহা পূর্ব্বে তাহার কখন ছিল কি কিমত আপন শক্তি আক্রান্ত করিয়া রণ করিল বৎসরাবধি সে বিরোধ উপস্থিত ছিল। যখন বৈরীদম্য সেনা আপনারদের পরাক্রমে দন্তায়মান হইলে সহজে বলবন্তকে সংহার করিয়া এবং তাহার প্রতিবাদী যে কেহ আসিয়া হইল সমস্তকে নিবারণ করিল জয় জয়কারধ্বনি সর্ব্বত্র ব্যাপক করাইল। এখন সে নিসাদরাজ্য এ অধিকারভুক্ত ইহাতে তোমার একি বুদ্ধি শিবা হইয়া কর বাদ সিংহের সহিত তুমি কাঙ্যালে এ প্রযুক্ত তোমাকে কহি সাবধান সাবধান এমত এমত দুঃসাহস আর কখন করিও না। তুমি দীন এখানকার লেখায় দরিদ্র সহায়হীন তোমার উচিত যদি দেবীসীমার চরে তোমার সেনার গমন হইয়া থাকে ইহাতে সেখানকার প্রজারদের যে কিছু ক্ষেতি হইয়া থাকে তাহার দ্বিগুণ করিয়া দিয়া তাহারদিগকে পরিতোষ করহ যাহাতে তাহারা এ পর্য্যন্ত আন্দোলন না করে। তাহা হইলে রক্ষা পাওয়া ভার। যাহা হউক। এমত এমত করিয়া সবান্ধব-বর্গে ও সসৈন্যে একত্র হইয়া বৈরিদম্য সেনার সাধনা করিলে বুঝি রক্ষা হইতে পারে বা। এ কারণ ক্ষীণ হীন দীন অকিঞ্চন লোকের ব্যামোহেতে আমার অন্তর সদা কাতর এবং স্তবের বশ অতএব ইহাই কর কহি শুন যদি তোমার ভাগ্যোদয় ক্রমে জ্ঞানের বাহুল্য হয় তবেই সে তোমার রক্ষা নতুবা নয়। কিন্তু যদি দুষ্টমতি তোমার প্রকৃতির সখা হইয়া থাকে তবে আর হিতোপদেশের আবশ্যক নাই সৈন্য সাজনা বাহির হইয়া সমাচার লিখিলেই বৈরিদম্য প্রস্তুত হবেক। ইহার যাহাতে অভিরুচি কিন্তু অদ্যই দেবীসীমা হইতে লোক উঠাইয়া লহ তাহার দ্বিক্ষণ গৌণ করিবা না। তোমার দশা গৌড়াধিপ ও একব্বর সাহের মত হবেক উপায় কি ইতি।

As we have already remarked, the prevalence of Persian words, which is so conspicuous a feature of *Pratāpāditya-charitra*, has almost disappeared in this publication. There is a marked tendency towards the use of Sanscrit words, but at the same time, in spite of elaborate superscription[1]

[1] p. 185. But simpler superscription too, *e.g.*, প্রাণপ্রতিম শ্রীযুক্ত অমুক পরম কল্যাণবরেষু (p. 191). But these are mere matters of form.

like অনন্যগতিক পোষ্যস্য পরমশুভাশী নিবেদনঞ্চ বিশেষঃ মহাশয়ের অতুলোন্নত রাজলক্ষ্মী নিয়ত প্রার্থনয়া তত্র নিবৃতিপরং", the style is not laboured or pedantic like that of some other pundits of the College. In this Rām Basu was proving himself a true disciple of Carey and Rām-mohan; from the former he learned to make the best use of the popular language and avoid academic affectation of laboured style, and from the latter he got an insight into the strength and power of the language on account of its close relation to the classical Sanscrit. The syntax and orthography, however, are still imperfect, although there is a great improvement indeed upon those of *Pratāpāditya-charitra*. Considering this growth and progress, it is to be regretted that Rām Basu's severance of all connexions with the College put an end to all opportunities of further and better prose-writing.

Its style more sanscritised yet not pedantic or elaborate.

Improvement upon *Pratāpāditya-charitra*.

A better specimen of easy prose-writing is to be found in Golak-nāth Śarmā's translation of *Hitopadeś*,[1] noticeable if not for its matter certainly for its form. It was published before *Lipimālā* but about the same time as *Pratāpāditya-charitra*, yet it displays great superiority of

Golak-nāth Śarmā. *Hitopadeś*, 1801.

[1] হিতোপদেশ। সংগ্রহ ভাষাতে। গোলকনাথ শর্ম্মণা ক্রিয়তে। শ্রীরামপুরে ছাপা হইল। ১৮০১; *Heet-padesha or Beneficial Instructions Translated from the original Sungskrit by Golaknath Pundit*. Serampore, Printed at the Mission Press, 1802. pp. 1-147. Yates, in his Selection, (*Intro. to Bengali Language*, vol. ii) does not quote from this work but from the version of Mṛtyuñjay. Yates himself published a translation of *Hitopadeś* in 1848. Besides Mṛtyuñjay Bidyalaṅkār's version, there is another version published in 1830 in Sanscrit, Bengali and English (editions in 1844, 1848, 1860 and 1880) by Lakṣmīnārayaṇ Nyayalaṅkār, Librarian to the College of Fort William (afterwards Sudder Ameen) and C. Wilkins. (Long, *Return of Names* etc., p. 133). A copy of this work will be found in the Library of the Board of Examiners.

language and manner. It is a pretty close but easy translation of the four books of the well-known moral essay—unabridged and unexpurgated—and the prose is plain and unassuming, except for a little quaintness smacking of the *ṭol* pundit and a little irregularity of syntax here and there. Although itself based upon a Sanscrit original and the author himself a learned pundit, well-versed, it may be, in the classical language there is yet no trace of any affectation of pedantry or magnificence. The style is free also from the Persian influence so conspicuous in Rām Basu's works. There is some attempt at periodic prose, but the syntax and arrangement, imitating commentorial queerness, is not all that could be desired, though it is certainly more correct and easy than that of *Pratāpāditya* or *Lipimālā*. With no conscious purpose of developing a prose style but with many unconscious experiments at arrangement and adjustment, here is, as in Carey's *Dialogues* or *Itihās-mālā*, much simplicity and desire to make the language clear and useful. There is hardly any necessity of quoting too many extracts, for the style, besides being plain and simple, has hardly any marked impressiveness of its own. The following extract

Its language.

Also in Blumhardt, *op. cit.* p. 115-116). A copy of Golak-nāth Śarmā's version is in the library of the British Museum bearing the same date and place of publication as we have given above (Blumhardt, *op. cit.* p. 115). Seton-Karr in his article on Bengali Literature in *Cal. Rev.*, 1849 (p. 499) is rather severe in his criticism on this work; but his views were formed, it seems, on the "condensed and corrected" specimens from this work given in Yates's *Introduction*, vol. ii (1847) ed. by Wenger. The work under review is entered as Golak-nāth's and dated 1801 in the *Catalogue of the Library of the Hon. East India Company*, 1845, p. 195. The date 1802, given in the Tenth *Memoir*, is inaccurate; but it follows the date given on the English title-page of the book

will be found illustrative. It is taken from the beginning or introduction [1] where the Princes are introduced to Visnuśarmā who begins teaching by narrating the stories :—

An Extract from the Introduction

সর্ব্বত্রে বিচিত্র কথা এবং নীতিবিদ্যাদায়িক সে কি মত তাহার বিশেষ কহি। পণ্ডিত যে ব্যক্তি সে বিদ্যার্থ কি মত চিন্তা করে তাহা শুন। অজরা অমরাবৎ আর ধর্ম্মাচরণ কেমন যেমত যমেতে কেশাকর্ষণ করিয়া থাকে তাদৃশ। অপর বিদ্যাবন্ত সকল দ্রব্যের মধ্যে অত্যুত্তম কহিয়াছেন তাহার কারণ এই অহরণীয় অমূল্য অপূর্ব্ব অংশির অধিকার নাহি ও চোরের অধিকার নাহি এবং দানেতেও ক্ষয় নাহি অতএব বিদ্যারত্ন মহাধন সংজ্ঞা। তাহার শক্তি কি কি বিদ্যা বিনয়দাতা বিনয় পাত্রদাতা পাত্র ধনদাতা ধন ধর্ম্ম ও সুখদাতা এ সকল বিষয় কহিলে পুস্তক বাহুল্য হয় অতএব সংক্ষেপে কিছু কিছু কহিব। সম্প্রতি মিত্রলাভ সুহৃদ্ভেদ বিগ্রহ সন্ধি। এই চারিভাগ।

কোন নদীর তীরেতে পাটলী পুত্র নামধেয় এক নগর আছে সে স্থানে সর্ব্বস্বামী গুণোপেত সুদর্শন নামে রাজা ছিল। সেই রাজা এককালে কোন কাহার মুখে দুই শ্লোক শুনিলেন তাহার অর্থ এই শাস্ত্র সকলের লোচন অতএব যে শাস্ত্র না জানে সেই অন্ধ। আর যৌবন ধন সম্পত্তি প্রভুত্ব অবিবেক ইহার যদি এক থাকে তবেই অনর্থ সমুদায় থাকিলে না জানি কি হয়। ইহা শুনিয়া সেই রাজা অত্যন্ত উদ্বিগ্ন মনে চিন্তা করিতে লাগিলেন যে আমার পুত্রেরা অতি মূর্খ অতএব ইহারদের কি হবে। এমন পুত্র থাকা না থাকা তুল্য। যে পুত্র অবিদ্যান ও অধার্ম্মিক সে পুত্রের কি কার্য্য যেমন কানার চক্ষুপীড়া মাত্র। যদি পুত্র হইয়া মরিত কিম্বা না হইত সে কেবল একবার দুঃখ কিন্তু মূর্খ পুত্র প্রতিপদে। বিদ্যাযুক্ত এবং সাধু যদি এক পুত্র হয়

[1] The story is to well-known to require an analysis of its contents here

তিনি পুরুষের মধ্যে সিংহ। যেমন চন্দ্র। যাদৃশ রজনীতে চন্দ্র উদয় না হইলে কোটি কোটি নক্ষত্রে অন্ধকার নাশ করিতে পারে না তাদৃশ এক শত মূর্খ পুত্র জানিবা এক সুপুত্রের তুল্য নহে। অপর যে ব্যক্তি অনেক দান ও পুণ্য করে তাহার পুত্র ধনবান ও ধীবান ও ধার্ম্মিক হয়। ঋণ কর্ত্তা পিতা শত্রু মাতা অপ্রিয়বাদিনী ভার্য্যা রূপবতী পুত্র অপণ্ডিত। উচ্চ বা নীচ হউক গুণবান সকল স্থানে পূজনীয়। যেমন বংশের গুণযুক্ত ধনুক নির্গুণ কি কার্য্যের। যে পুত্র না পাঠ করে সে পুত্র পণ্ডিতের মধ্যে কীদৃশ যেমন পঙ্কের মধ্যে গরু পড়িলে হয়। গর্ব্ভস্থ মনুষ্যের এই পাচ যোগ হইয়া থাকে আয়ু কর্ম্ম বিত্ত বিদ্যা নিধন। কিন্তু যদি কেহ ভাবে যে যা হবার তা হবে সে অতি অলশের কথা তাহার প্রমাণ যেমত রথের গতি কেবল চক্রেতে হয় না এবং পুরুষ কারের চেষ্টা ব্যতিরেক হয় না। অপর কুম্ভকার আপন ইচ্ছামত তাহার কার্য্য করিতে পারে তাদৃশ আত্মকৃত কর্ম্ম মনুষ্যে করিতে পারে। অপরঞ্চ কাকের তাল ফেলার ন্যায় অগ্রে নিধি দেখিয়া পায় তাহা ঈশ্বর দত্ত বটে কিন্তু পুরুষার্থ অপেক্ষা করে যদি কোন কাহার অগ্রে পাকা তাল কাকে ফেলায় সে দেখিয়া যদি না যায় তবে কখন পাবে না অতএব যে পিতা মাতা তাহার পুত্রকে না পড়ায় সে শত্রু এবং সে পুত্র সভার মধ্যে কেমন দীপ্তি হয় যেমন হংসের মধ্যে বক। মুকের শোভা যাবৎ কিছু না বলে তাবৎ মাত্র। মোটা দ্রব্য চিক্কণ হয় ও চিক্কণ মোটা হয় যেমন চন্দ্র কৃষ্ণ পক্ষে ও শুক্ল পক্ষে। সে রাজা এই সকল চিন্তা করিয়া পণ্ডিতের সভা করিলেন। ভো ভো পণ্ডিতেরা অবধান কর। আমার পুত্রেরা নিত্য উল্টা পথগামী অতএব তাহারদের নীতিশাস্ত্রে পুনর্ব্বার জন্ম দেহ। যথা কাঞ্চন সংসর্গতে কাচ যে তিনি বহুমুল্য প্রস্তরের দীপ্তি ধারণ করেন তথা সন্নিধানেতে মূর্খ যে তিনি প্রবীণতা পান। তাহার স্থল এই যদি হীনের সহিত থাকে তবে হীন মতি হয় সমানের সংসর্গে সমতা হয় বিশিষ্টের সহিত থাকিলে বিশিষ্টতা পায়। অতঃপরে বিষ্ণুশর্ম্মা নামেতে ব্রাহ্মণ মহাপণ্ডিত সকল নীতিশাস্ত্রজ্ঞ বৃহস্পতির ন্যায় কহিলেন হে মহারাজা এই সকল রাজপুত্রেরদিগকে আমি নীতিশাস্ত্রেতে জ্ঞান করিয়া দিব। বিনা

ব্যাপারে কাহারু কিছু হয় না অতএব আমি মহারাজার পুত্রেরদিগকে ছয় মাসের মধ্যে যেরূপে হয় সেইরূপে নীতিশাস্ত্রেতে জ্ঞান জন্মাইয়া দিব মহারাজা তাহারদিগের কারণ কোন চিন্তা করিবেন না। মহারাজা বিনয় পূর্ব্বক পুনর্ব্বার কহিতেছেন। যদি কীট পুষ্পের সহিত থাকে তবে মহতের শিরে আরোহন করে। আর সাধু ব্যক্তি যদ্যপি পাথর স্থাপন করে তবে সে পাথর দেবত্ব পায়। যেমত পর্ব্বতের উপরের দ্রব্য নিকটে দীপ্তি হয় তেমন সতের নিকটে হীনবর্ণের দীপ্তি হয়। অতএব বিষ্ণু-শর্ম্মাকে বহুমর্য্যাদা করিয়া রাজা আপন পুত্রেরদিগকে লইয়া সমর্পণ করিলেন।[1]

It would be convenient to notice here briefly Gilchrist's translation of Æsop's and other fables from the English language. Although done under the direction and supervision of Dr. Gilchrist [2] it must be borne in mind that the version occurs in a book of polyglot translation (six versions) of Æsop's and other fables into the various dialects of India [3] done by various hands. For the Bengali version is responsible one Tāriṇīcharaṇ Mitra who was employed especially for "Bungla, Persian and Hindoosthanee." He is called "a

Dr. John B Gilchrist's *Oriental Fabulist* 1803.

[1] হিতোপদেশ, pp. 3-8.

[2] Dr. John Borthwick Gilchrist, LL. D., F. R. S. E. was Professor of Hindusthani in the Fort William College. He was well-versed in numerous dialects of India and wrote a number of works on Hindusthani.

[3] This translation will be found in a publication of the Fort William College, entitled the *Oriental Fabulist* (1803) by John Gilchrist. It contains "*Polyglot Translation of Æsop's and other ancient fables from the English Language into Hindoosthanee, Persian, Arabic, Brijbhakha Bongla and Sunkrit in the Roman Character by various hands under the direction and superintendence of John Gilchrist for the use of the College of Fort William.* Calcutta. Printed at the Hurkaru office. 1803." (See Roebuck, *op. cit.* App II. p. 27: Buchanan, *op, cit.* p. 221).

learned native" in the Preface by Dr. Gilchrist who also pays him a high tribute when he says "it behoves me now more particularly to specify that to Tarneechurun Mitr's (*sic*) patient labour and considerable proficiency in the English tongue, am I greatly indebted for the accuracy and dispatch with which the collection has been at last completed. The public may feel and duly appreciate the benefit of his assiduity and talents, evident in the Bungla version" [1]. Tāriṇīcharaṇ Mitra was "Head Moonshee" in the Hindusthani Department appointed in May, 1801.[2] Tāriṇīcharaṇ thus seems also to have been proficient in Persian and Hindusthani. We select here a short piece as a specimen:—

Tāriṇīcharaṇ Mitra's share in the version.

ষষ্ঠ কথা। খেঁকশিয়ালী ও দাঁড়কাকের।

এক খেঁকশিয়ালী দেখিলেক এক দাঁড়কাক ভাল এক টুকরা পোনীরের আপন মুখে লইয়া গাছের ডালের উপর বসিয়া রহিয়াছে, তৎক্ষণাৎ খেঁকশিয়ালী বিবেচনা করিতে লাগিল যে এমন সুস্বাদ্য গ্রাস কেমন করিয়া হাত করিতে পারিব। কহিলেক, হে প্রিয় কাক, আজি সকালে তোমাকে দেখিয়া আমি বড় সন্তুষ্ট হইয়াছি; তোমার সুন্দর মুর্ত্তি আর উজ্জ্বল পালক আমার চক্ষের জ্যোতি, যদি নম্রতাক্রমে তুমি অনুগ্রহ করিয়া আমাকে একটি গান শুনাইতে তবে নিঃসন্দেহ জানিতাম যে তোমার স্বর তোমার

An illustrative fable quoted.

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[1] p. xxiv-xxv. Dr. Gilchrist in the Preface (p. xxv) to this work, expresses his intention of publishing the Bengali version, which seems to be the best, in a separate form, not in Roman but in Bengali character. I do not know whether it was ever published. Long mentions Dr. Gilchrist's translation of the Æsop's fable published in 1803. I have not been able to trace this separate publication if it ever existed.

[2] Roebuck, *op. cit.* App. III. p. 48

আর আর গুণের সমান বটে। আনন্দোন্মত্ত কাক এই অনুনয় কথাতে ভুলিয়া তাহাকে আপন স্বরের পরিপাটী দেখাইবার জন্যে মুখ খুলিলেক তখন পোনীর নীচে পড়িল, তাহা তখনি খেকশিয়ালী উঠাইয়া লইয়া জয়যুক্ত প্রস্থান করিলেক, আর দাঁড়কাককে অবসরক্রমে আপন মিথ্যাগরিমার খেদ করিতে রাখিয়া গেল।

ইহার ফল এই, যেখানে আরোপিত কথা প্রবেশ করে সেখানে জ্ঞানগোচর লোপ পায়।[1]

It is no little credit to the writer of this passage, as the reader will observe, that the prose for a translated piece shows great improvement indeed upon what had been published hitherto, and it is with great difficulty that we resist the temptation of giving more extracts of this simple homely style. This work resembles much Carey's *Itihās-mālā* in its perspicuity and elegance, although the latter book was published almost a decade after this. It is by always aiming to be plain, accurate and natural that the language of this work succeeds in attaining such excellence of diction among contemporary records in spite of its very close adherence to its English original and occasional imitation, as in the passage quoted, of English and Persian constructions. It is to be regretted, however, that the writer of these pieces never tried his hand at original prose-writing which if he had touched, he might have adorned in a way better than many of his contemporaries.

The simplicity and elegance of its prose

[1] *The Oriental Fabulist* (1803) ed. by Gilchrist, p. 35. In the transliteration I have corrected the spelling, otherwise no alteration is made; for the transliteration seems to have been made according to sound rather than according to spelling. The transliterated version in Roman letters is given in Appendix III. at the end of this volume, where a note also will be found on this system of transliteration; for which I am indebted to Professor Suniti Kumar Chatterji.

Chandīcharan Munshī's [1] *Totā Itihās* and Rājīb Lochan Mukhopādhyāy's *Rājā Kṛṣṇachandra Rāyer Charitra*, both published in the same year, exhibit however noticeable contrast of style and language. *Totā Itihās* [2] is by far the better work both in form and subject, although it is a mere translation from some Persian original and its language shows admixture of Persian. It consists of thirty-four "tales of a parrot," as its name implies, and is said to have been translated from a Persian original "*Tootanamah*." [3] Similar collections of tales there are

Chandīcharan Munshī.

Totā Itihās 1805

Its original.

[1] Called Chunder Churun Moonshee by Buchanan (*op. cit.* p. 229) which is evidently a mistake.

[2] There are copies of the first edition in the Library of the Board of Examiners and Presidency College Library. The title-page says: তোতা ইতিহাস। বাঙ্গালা ভাষাতে। শ্রীচণ্ডীচরণ মুন্শীতে রচিত। শ্রীরামপুরে ছাপা হইল। ১৮০৫। Roebuck (*op. cit.* App. II. p. 29) and Buchanan (*op. cit.* p. 228) also give this date of publication. The copy in the Sāhitya Parisat Library (and also one in the British Museum Library), which seem to be reprints of 1825, bear a somewhat different title-page. শ্রী। তোতা ইতিহাস॥ বাঙ্গালা ভাষাতে॥ শ্রীচণ্ডীচরণ মুন্সীতে রচিত॥ লণ্ডন রাজধানীতে চাপা হইল॥ ১৮২৫॥ The fount of this latter reprint is very neat. Misled probably by the date of this edition, Dinesh Chandra Sen (*History*, p. 890) puts the date apparently of the first edition at 1826. The copy of an edition in the British Museum Library bears 1806 as the date of publication (Blumhardt, *Catalogue*, p. 31). There is also mention of a 12mo Ed. printed in London 1811 in the *Catalogue of the Library of East India College*, and an 8vo. Ed. London 1811 is entered in the *Catalogue of the Library of the Hon. East India Company*, p. 196. There is a curious diglot edition (English-Bengali) of this work in the Sāhitya Parisat Library: the Bengali version appears on the right and English on the left side on the same page. The date cannot be ascertained for the title-page is lost; but judging from the typography, it seems to have been printed in London.

[3] Buchanan, *op. cit.* p. 228. Chandīcharan is also said to have

also in Sanscrit, the most well-known among which is the '*Śuka-saptati*' or 'Seventy Stories of a Parrot [1].

Description of the work.

We give here a description of the work under review and it is interesting to compare it with the Sanscrit version. A wife, whose husband is travelling abroad, and who is inclined to run after other men, turns to her husband's clever talking parrot for advice. The bird while seeming to approve of her wicked plans, warns her of the risks she runs, and makes her promise not to go and meet any paramour unless she can extricate herself from difficulties as so-and-so did. Requested to tell the story, he does no; but in the meantime the story is spun out to such a length that when it is concluded, morning dawns and her plans are postponed till next night. Thus the bird succeeds in keeping his mistress in the path of rectitude not by pointed injunctions, but by a device similar to that which Shehrazade in the Arabian Nights employs to hinder the Sultan from sacrificing a fresh victim on every succeeding day. Several days pass in this way, till the husband returns to find the honour of his home inviolate. This is the frame-work which contains the thirty-four stories, some of which are very amusing indeed, although many of them are somewhat coarse. It is written in simple narrative prose, eminently suited to the purpose of the book, and, although cried down for its slight inevitable admixture of Persian especially at the beginning, the language is in no way inferior to that of *Hitopadeś* or *Oriental Fabulist* and certainly marks great advance in simplicity and naturalness upon *Pratāpāditya-charitra* or *Lipimālā*. Its literary

translated the *Bhagabatgītā* from Sanscrit into Bengali: this work if published at all, I have not been able to trace.

[1] Macdonell, *Hist. of Sans. Lit.* p. 375.

pretensions are few indeed, but the writer is a very good story-teller and has succeeded in making his book interesting, both in form and matter."[1]

A story quoted as a specimen.

The following quotation of a shorter story will serve both as specimen of its tales and of its language. [2]

একজন চৌকিদার রাজা তেবরস্তানের সহিত হিতকর্ম্ম করিয়াছিল তাহার প্রসঙ্গ এই।—

যখন দিবাগত রাত্রি উপস্থিত হইল তখন খোজেস্তা[3] বহুমূল্য শয্যা হইতে গাত্রোত্থান করিয়া নানাবিধ খাদ্যসামগ্রী আর ফলাদি আনাইয়া ভোজন করিয়া আপন চন্দ্রতুল্য বদন সাজাইয়া স্বর্ণরূপ্যের সূত্রের বস্ত্র পরিধান করিয়া শুকপক্ষির সমীপে আসিয়া রাজপুত্রের[4] নিকট যাইতে

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[1] This book seems to have become very popular; Dr. Yates, in his Selection, gives 18 stories from it alone. Dr. Yates, however, stretches his point too far when he says that the language of this work is deserving of attention because it is "a very fair specimen of the colloquial language and its almost unbounded negligence." (Rev. W. Yates, *Introduction to the Bengali Language* in two volumes 1847. ed. by J. Wenger; vol. ii containing Selections from Bengali Literature, p. 1). Haughton's *Selections* (1822) contain 10 stories from it. The book was also translated into Hindusthani. See Roebuck *op. cit.* App. II. p. 24; "*Tota Kuhanee* a Translation into the Hindoosthanee Tongue, of the popular Persian Tales, entitled Tootee Namu, by Sueyid Huedur Buksh Huedureo, under the superintendence of John Gilchrist, for the use of the students in the College of Fort William, Calcutta, printed at the Hindoosthanee Press in one vol. 4to. 1804."

[2] This story also occurs in another form in the *Hitopadeś*. It is also quoted in Haughton's *Selections*, p. 12-18; trans. p. 92-96.

[3] This is the wife whose husband Maymun has gone abroad; this introductory passage as well as the conclusions forms the link which connects a particular story with what precedes and what follows it, and is thus a part of the framework into which stories of miscellaneous character are thrown in.

[4] This is the paramour with whom an appointment was made to meet at midnight.

বিদায় চাহিলেন। শুক কহিলেক যে তুমি মনে কিছু উদ্বিগ্না হইও না আহ্লাদিত থাক আমি তোমার কর্ম্মে চেষ্টিত আছি তোমাকে রাজপুত্রের নিকট পহুছাইব কিন্তু রাজপুত্রের যে প্রীতি আর ভালবাসা তোমাতে আছে তাহা তুমি হৃদয়ে রাখিবা যেমন চৌকিদার আপন মনেতে তেবরস্তান রাজাকে ভরসা দ্রাঢ্য করিয়া ধন পাইয়াছিল তুমি তদ্রূপ রাজপুত্রকে ভাবনা করিও তবে তাহাকে অবশ্য পাইবা। খোজেস্তা ইহা শুনিয়া শুককে প্রশ্ন করিলেন যে তেবরস্তান রাজার উপাখ্যান কিরূপ তাহা কহ।—

শুক উত্তর করিল যে পূর্ব্বের মনুষ্যেরা ও মন্ত্রীরা এমত কহিয়াছেন যে রাজা তেবরস্তান এক দিবস আপন সভা স্বর্গের ন্যায় সাজাইয়া উত্তম অন্ন ব্যঞ্জন এবং নানাপ্রকার মদ্যমাংস ভক্ষ্যদ্রব্য সভামধ্যে রাখিয়া ঐ দেশের রাজপুত্র ও মন্ত্যাদক ও পণ্ডিত ও শিক্ষাগুরুরদিগকে সেই স্থানে উপস্থিত করিয়া সেই সব উত্তম দ্রব্য তাঁহারদিগকে ভোজন করাইতেছিলেন ইতিমধ্যে অকস্মাৎ সেই স্থানে একজন বিদেশী উপস্থিত হইল। তদনন্তর রাজসভাস্থ প্রধানেরা তাহাকে জিজ্ঞাসিলেন যে তুমি কে কোথা হইতে আসিয়াছ কি কার্য্য কর। সেই ব্যক্তি উত্তর করিলেক যে আমি তলোয়ার মারিতে আর ব্যাঘ্র ধরিতে পারি ইহা ব্যতিরেক আর আর রূপ শিল্পকর্ম্ম জ্ঞাত আছি আর তীর এমত মারিতে পারি যে আমার তীর কঠিন প্রস্তরেতে ছিদ্র করিয়া নির্গত হয় এবং খজেন্দর নামা একজন ধনবান আছেন আমি কিছু দিবস তাঁহার নিকটে চাকর ছিলাম কিন্তু খজেন্দর আমার কিছু গুণ বিবেচনা করিয়া বুঝিলেন না অতএব আমি তাঁহার চাকরি ত্যাগ করিয়া মহারাজ তেবরস্তানের নাম শুনিয়া তাহার নিকট চাকরি করিতে আসিয়াছি। মহারাজা তেবরস্তান এই কথা শুনিয়া রাজদরবারের লোকেরদিগকে আজ্ঞা দিলেন যে এই ব্যক্তিকে চৌকিদারি কর্ম্মে নিযুক্ত কর। পরে কর্ম্মকর্ত্তারা রাজাজ্ঞানুসারে তাহাকে চৌকিদারি চাকুরিতে নিযুক্ত করিলেন। সেই জন প্রত্যহ রাত্রিতে এক পদে দাঁড়াইয়া রাজার অট্টালিকারদিগে দৃষ্টি করিয়া থাকে এক দিবস

অর্দ্ধরাত্রের পরে রাজা উপর ঘরের ছাতে বেড়াইয়া সকল দিগে দৃষ্টি করিতে ২ নীচেতে দেখিলেন যে এক জন এক পাদে দাঁড়াইয়া রহিয়াছে। রাজা তাহাকে দেখিয়া জিজ্ঞাসিলেন তুমি কে বট অর্দ্ধ নিশাতে কি কারণ এক পদে দাঁড়াইয়া আছ। চৌকিদার কহিলেক যে রাজ-দর্শনার্থে আকাঙ্ক্ষিত ছিলাম অদ্য আমার ভাগ্যের সহকারেতে দর্শন করিয়া বড় আহ্লাদিত আমোদিত হইলাম। রাজা আর চৌকিদারেতে এই কথোপকথন হইতেছিল ইতিমধ্যে মাঠের দিগ হইতে এক শব্দ রাজার কর্ণকুহরে পঁহুছিল সে শব্দ এই একজন কহিতেছে যে আমি যাইতেছি কে এমত মনুষ্য আছে যে আমাকে ফিরাইবে। ইহা শুনিয়া রাজা বিস্মিত হইয়া চৌকিদারকে কহিলেন যে ওহে চৌকিদার এ শব্দের বৃত্তান্ত তুমি কিছু জানহ। চৌকিদার উত্তর করিল ও মহারাজ কএক দিবস রাত্রিযোগে এইরূপ শব্দ শুনিতেছি কিন্তু চৌকিদারি কর্ম্মেতে থাকিতে কারণ গমন করিয়া জ্ঞাত হইতে পারি না যে এ শব্দ কাহার যদি আপনি আজ্ঞা দেন তবে অতি শীঘ্র গমন করিয়া শব্দের নিশ্চয় জানিয়া তোমার দাসেরদের সাক্ষাতে বিস্তারিত নিবেদন করিতে পারি। রাজা কহিলেন শীঘ্র যাইয়া সম্বাদ আনহ। চৌকিদার রাজাজ্ঞা পাইয়া তৎক্ষণাৎ গমন করিলেন। পরে রাজা কৃষ্ণবর্ণ এক কম্বলেতে শরীর ঢাকিয়া চৌকিদারের পশ্চাৎ গেলেন। চৌকিদার সে স্থানে পঁহুছিয়া দেখিল যে পথমধ্যে এক সুন্দরী দাঁড়াইয়া কহিতেছে যে আমি যাইতেছি আমাকে কে ফিরাইবেক। ইহা শুনিয়া চৌকিদার প্রশ্ন করিলেক যে ও স্ত্রীলোক তুমি এমত কথা কেন কহিতেছ। সে স্ত্রীলোক উত্তর করিলেক যে আমি রাজা তেররস্তানের পরমায়ুর প্রতিমূর্ত্তী রাজার আয়ুঃ শেষ হইয়াছে অতএব আমি যাইতেছি। চৌকিদার ইহা শুনিয়া কহিলেন তুমি রাজার পরমায়ু এখন তুমি কিরূপে বাহুড়িয়া থাকিবে। প্রতিবিম্ব কহিলেন শুন হে চৌকিদার যদ্যপি তুমি আপন পুত্রকে রাজার পরমায়ুর বদলেতে আমার সম্মুখে বলিদান দেও তবে আমি অবশ্য ফিরিয়া থাকিব রাজাও কতক কাল বাঁচিয়া থাকিবেন কদাচ শীঘ্র মরিবেন না। চৌকিদার ইহা শুনিয়া তুষ্ট হইয়া উত্তর করিলেক

যদি আমার প্রাণ আর আমার পুত্রের প্রাণ এই দুই দিলেও রাজা রক্ষা পান তবে অবশ্য দিব কিন্তু তুমি মুহূর্ত্তেক বিলম্ব কর আমি বাটী যাইয়া আপন সন্তানকে আনিয়া তোমার সাক্ষাতে বলিদান করি। ইহা বলিয়া চৌকিদার আপন গৃহেতে যাইয়া এই সমস্ত কথা বড় পুত্রকে অবগত করিলেক। তদনন্তর সেই পুত্র সংবিবেচক জ্ঞানী ইহাই শুনিয়া উত্তর করিল যে রাজা তেবরস্তান অতি বিচারক ও প্রজাপালক দৈন-দুঃখদূরকর্ত্তা যদি আমাকে বলিদান করিলে তিনি রক্ষা পান এ বড় উত্তম প্রকরণ কেন না আমার মরণেতে ক্ষতি নাহি এ রাজার মন্দ হইলে আর কোন দূর্জ্জন ব্যক্তি রাজা হইবেন তাহার দুষ্টতাতে সহস্র ২ লোক নাশ হইয়া দেশ ওএরাণ হইবেক রাজা তেবরস্তান বাঁচিলে সহস্র ২ প্রজালোকেরদিগের সুখ এবং দেশের আবাদ হইবেক ও আমি শিক্ষাগুরুর স্থানে শুনিয়াছি তিনি এক দিবস চৌবাটীর পড়ুয়ারদিগকে কহিতেছিলেন যে রাজসমভিব্যাহৃত লোকেরা যদি বিচারক রাজার প্রাণ রক্ষার্থে এক জন প্রজাকে নষ্ট করে ইহাতে পাপ হয় না। ঈশ্বর করেন যে এমত রাজা না মরেন আর অবিচারক রাজা রাজ্য না করে অতএব শীঘ্র আমাকে প্রতিমার নিকট লইয়া যাও এবং ছেদন কর তারপর চৌকিদার প্রতিমার সাক্ষাতে পুত্রকে আনিয়া হস্তপাদাদি বন্ধন করিয়া তীক্ষ্ণ ছোরা আপন করে লইয়া হেঁটমুণ্ড হইয়া ছেদন করিতে উদ্যত হইল। প্রতিবিম্ব ইহা দেখিয়া শীঘ্র চৌকিদারের হস্ত ধরিয়া নিষেধ করিলেন যে তুমি তোমার পুত্রের গলা ছেদন করিও না ঈশ্বর সর্ব্বকর্ত্তা তোমার যোগ্যতা আর উত্তমতাতে বড় তুষ্ট হইয়া অনুগ্রহ করিয়া আমাকে ফিরিয়া ষষ্টিশত বৎসর থাকিতে আজ্ঞা দিলেন। চৌকিদার এই মঙ্গল সমাচার শুনিয়া বড় আহ্লাদিত হইল। চৌকিদারে আর প্রতিমাতে এবং চৌকিদারের পুত্রেতে যে কথোপকথন হইয়াছিল রাজা সেই সমস্ত শুনিয়া এবং দেখিয়া চৌকিদারের আগমনের পূর্ব্বে গৃহে আসিয়া অট্টালিকার উপর পূর্ব্ববৎ ভ্রমণ করিতে লাগিলেন।

চৌকিদার অর্দ্ধদণ্ডেতে রাজার সম্মুখে আসিয়া উপস্থিত হইয়া প্রণাম করিয়া মঙ্গল প্রার্থনা করিল যে মহারাজার আয়ুঃ ও ঐশ্বর্য্য এবং রাজ্য

আর সৈন্যের বৃদ্ধি হউক। তারপর রাজা জিজ্ঞাসিলেন ওহে চৌকিদার কহ শব্দের বৃত্তান্ত কি জানিলা। চৌকিদার কহিলেক মহারাজ শ্রবণ করিতে আজ্ঞা হউক। এক স্ত্রী সর্ব্বাঙ্গসুন্দরী আপন স্বামির সহিত কলহ করিয়া বাটী হইতে বাহিরে আসিয়া পথমধ্যে বসিয়া মনোদুঃখেতে শব্দ করিতেছিল যে আমি যাইতেছি এমত কোন ব্যক্তি আছে আমাকে ফিরাইবে। আমি সেই স্ত্রীর সাক্ষাতে পঁহুছিয়া কোমল বাক্য দ্বারায় তুষিয়া তাহারদের স্ত্রীপুরুষে মিলন করিয়া দিলাম এখন সেই স্ত্রী স্বীকৃত হইলেন যে আমি স্বামির বাটী হইতে আর ষষ্টিশত বৎসর আর কোথাও যাইব না। রাজা চৌকিদারের উত্তম ধারাতে আর জ্ঞানেতে তুষ্ট হইয়া কহিলেন ওহে চৌকিদার যে কালে তুমি আমার বাটীর বাহির হইলা সেই সময় আমিও তোমার পশ্চাৎ গমন করিয়া দূর হইতে তোমার আর প্রতিমার এবং তোমার তনয়ের উত্তর প্রত্যুত্তর শুনিয়াছি আর তোমরা যাহা করিয়াছিলা তাহাও দেখিয়াছি ঈশ্বর তোমার ভাল করিবেন এবং আমিও ভগবানের প্রার্থনার দ্বারা তোমার দৈন্য দূর করিব ও ধনবান করিব। তারপর রাজা রাজসিংহাসনে উপবিষ্ট হইলে দেশের প্রধানেরা ও সকল বিচারকেরাও হাজীর হইলেন। এই সময় রাজা তাঁহারদের সাক্ষাতে চৌকিদারকে প্রধান মন্ত্রী ও ধনভাণ্ডারির কর্ম্মে নিযুক্ত করিয়া চাবি ও কুলুপ সকল তাহাকে সমর্পণ করিলেন।—

তোতা তেবরস্তান রাজার এই কথা সাঙ্গ করিলেই রাত্রি প্রভাত ও সূর্য্য উদয় হইল এ কারণ সেই দিবস খোজেস্তার যাওন হইল না। খোজেস্তা সমস্ত রজনী এই ইতিহাস শ্রবণে জাগ্রত ছিলেন অতএব মখমলের বিছানাতে শয়ন করিলেন।—[1]

Rājīb-lochan Mukhopādhyāy.

As in the case of most of the Bengali writers of this period, nothing practically is known about the life of the author of *Rājā Kṛṣṇachandra Rāyer Charitra*[2] except that in the description of the book given by

[1] তোতা ইতিহাস, pp. 21–29.

[2] The title-page says; *History of Raja Krishnu Chundru Roy*;

Buchanan,[1] Rājīb-lochan is said to have been "descended from the family of the Raja." The book is supposed to be an authentic account of the Rājā, dead not many years before this book was published, and his correspondence with the English in the early period of their intercourse with Bengal: but it seems that the memoir is more of a tissue of fables and traditionary tales; and much of the narrative, especially at the beginning, is mere fiction such as tradition or the fancy of the writer might have suggested. We do not go so far as to suggest that these tales were invented, as Dr. Yates[2] remarks, "in order to

Rāja Kṛṣṇachandra Rāyer Charitra, 1805.

Its historical value.

মহারাজ কৃষ্ণচন্দ্র রায়স্য চরিত্রং। শ্রীযুত রাজীবলোচন মুখোপাধ্যায়ের রচিতং। কৃষ্ণচন্দ্র মহারাজ ধরণীর মাজ যাহার অধিকারে নবদ্বীপ সমাজ। পূর্ব্ববৃত্তান্ত যত করিয়া প্রচার কৃষ্ণচন্দ্র চরিত্র পরে করিব বিস্তার॥ শ্রীরামপুরে ছাপা হইল। ১৮০৫। pp 1-120. Long says that it was reprinted in London 1830 but the second reprint at Śrīrāmpur bears the date of 1857 (Sāhitya-Parisat Library). There is a copy in the Library of the Board of Examiners which is reprinted at Śrīrāmpur bearing the date of 1834; and two copies in the British Museum Library (Blumhardt, *Catalogue*, p. 89) printed in London in 1811. Also mentioned in the *Catalogue of the Library of the East India College* (1843) and *Catalogue of the Library of the Hon'ble East India Company* (1845) p. 196. There are copies of the first edition of this work in the Library of the Board of Examiners and also in the Bengal Asiatic Society Library. In the paper on Bengali Literature (*Cal. Rev.* xiii. 1850) Long gives this work the absurd date of 1801: and following him, Ram-gati Nyayaratna repeats the error. See, however, Roebuck, *op. cit* App. II. p. 29 so Buchanan, *op. cit.* p. 228. Besides this work of Rājīb-lochan's contains a reference at p. 9 to Rām Rām Basu's *Pratāpādityasya caritra* and must therefore have been published after 1801.

[1] *Op. cit.* p. 228. The full description is this: "an original work in the Bengali language containing the correspondence between the Raja and the English in the early period of their intercourse with Bengal by Rajeeblochan Moonshee descended from the family of the Raja."

[2] *Intro. to Beng. Lang* vol. ii p 124. Seton-Karr's severity on his work (*Cal. Rev.* 1849, p. 501), following Yates, seems to be unwarranted

gain the favour of the English"; but we must admit that it shows more leaning towards gossip than *Pratāpāditya-charitra* does. In point of language, however, the last-named work compares very unfavourably with the work under review. Mahāmahopādhyāy Haraprasād groups this work with *Pratāpāditya* in the class of "unreadables" for its language, but the plain story-telling style, occasionally Sanscritised and wholly free from Persian, eminently befits the gossipy tendency of the work. The story is enlivened by frequent introduction of descriptions, dialogues, letters and anecdotes; and the narrative towards the end, describing the Rājā's acquaintance with the Nawāb, his joining the conspiracy, his negociations with the English, and the ultimate triumph of his party with the defeat of the Nawāb is told in a connected and interesting manner, with a large infusion, however, of fiction which may not be strictly acceptable to the historian. But it is this mingling of fact and gossip that makes the work so interesting to the general reader. The work begins with a preliminary account, legendary and historical, of pedigrees and ancestries, then narrates the story of Rājā Kṛṣṇachandra's birth, his marriage, his religious work, a description of his residence called *Śiba-nibāsa*, his amusements, his acquaintances with Nawāb Sirāj, his joining a conspiracy started by MīrJā'far and others against the Nawāb, his delegation to the English at Calcutta by the conspirators, his negociations there with the *Baḍa-sāheb* of the Factory, flight of Rājballabh and his son, correspondence between the Nawāb and the English, the Nawāb's descent upon Calcutta, agreement with MīrJā'far, the meeting of the English and

Its language and manner.

A description of the work.

the Mohammedan forces at Plassey, flight of Sirāj and his assasination by Mīran; and then the story ends with a short account of the posterity of the Rājā. We give here an extract from the passage describing the Rājā's joining the conspiracy, which will serve as a specimen of both its language and manner.[1]

রাজা [কৃষ্ণচন্দ্র] বাসায় আসিয়া মহারাজ মহেন্দ্র ও রাজা রামনারায়ণ ও রাজা রাজবল্লভ এবং জগৎসেট ও মীরজাফরালি খাঁ ইহারদিগের নিকট মনুষ্য প্রেরিত করিলেন আমি সাক্ষাৎ করিতে যাইব সকলেই অনুমতি করিলেন রাত্রে আসিতে কহিও ক্রমে ২ রাজা সকলের নিকট রাত্রে গমন করিয়া আত্মনিবেদন করিলেন। পরে জগৎসেট কহিলেন এ দেশের অত্যন্ত অপ্রতুল হইল দেশাধিকারী অতিদুরন্ত কাহারু বাক্য শুনে না দিন ২ দৌরাত্ম্য অধিক হইতেছে অতএব সকলে একবাক্যতা হইয়া বিবেচনা না করিলে কাহারু নিষ্কৃতি নাই এই কথার পর রাজা কৃষ্ণচন্দ্র রায় কহিলেন আপনারা রাজদ্বারের কর্ত্তা আমরা আপনকার দিগের মতাবলম্বী যেমন ২ কহিবেন সেইরূপ কার্য্য করিব ইহাই শুনিয়া জগৎসেট কহিলেন অদ্য বাসায় যাউন আমি মহারাজা মহেন্দ্রের সহিত পরামর্শ করিয়া নিভৃত একস্থানে বসিয়া আপনকাকে ডাকাইব সে দিবস বিদায় হইয়া রাজা বাসায় আসিলেন। পরে এক দিবস জগৎসেটের বাটীতে রাজা মহেন্দ্র প্রভৃতি সকলে বসিয়া রাজা কৃষ্ণচন্দ্র রায়কে আহ্বান করিলেন দূত আসিয়া রাজাকে লইয়া গেল যথাযোগ্য স্থানে সকলে বসিলেন। ক্ষণেক পরে রাজা রামনারায়ণ প্রশ্ন করিলেন আপনারা সকলেই বিবেচনা করুন দেশাধিকারী অতিশয় দুর্বৃত্ত উত্তর ২ দৌরাত্ম্যের বৃদ্ধি হইতেছে অতএব কি করা যায় এই কথার পর মহারাজা মহেন্দ্র কহিলেন আমরা পুরুষানুক্রমে নবাবের চাকর যদি আমারদিগের হইতে কোন ক্ষতি নবাব সাহেবের হয় তবে অধর্ম্ম এবং অখ্যাতি অতএব আমি কোন মন্দ কর্ম্মের মধ্যে থাকিব না তবে যে পূর্ব্বে এক আদ বাক্য কহিয়া ছিলাম সে বড় উষ্মা প্রযুক্ত এইক্ষণে বিবেচনা করিলাম এ সব

[1] *Kṛṣṇachandra Rāyer Charitra*, pp. 65-73.

কার্য্য ভাল নয় এই কথার পর রাজা রামনারায়ণ ও রাজা রাজবল্লভ এবং জগৎসেট ও মীরজাফরালি খাঁ কহিলেন যদ্যপি আপনি এ পরামর্শ হইতে ক্ষান্ত হইলেন কিন্তু দেশ রক্ষা পায় না এবং ভদ্র লোকের জাতি প্রাণ থাকা ভার হইল। অনেক অনেক রূপ কহিতে মহারাজা মহেন্দ্র কহিলেন তোমরা কি প্রকার করিবা তখন রাজা রামনারায়ণ কহিলেন পূর্ব্বে এ কথার প্রস্তাপ এক দিবস হইয়াছিল তাহাতে সকলে কহিয়াছিলেন রাজা কৃষ্ণচন্দ্র রায় অতি বড় মন্ত্রী তাঁহাকে আনাইয়া জিজ্ঞাসা করা যাউক তিনি যেমন ২ পরামর্শ দিবেন সেইমত কার্য্য করিব এখন রাজা কৃষ্ণচন্দ্র রায় এই সাক্ষাতে আছেন ইহাকে জিজ্ঞাসা করুণ যে যে পরামর্শ কহেন তাহাই শ্রবণ করিয়া যে হয় পশ্চাৎ করিবেন। ইহার পর রাজা কৃষ্ণচন্দ্র রায়কে সকলে জিজ্ঞাসা করিলেন তুমি সকলি জ্ঞাত হইয়াছ এখন কি কর্ত্তব্য। রাজা কৃষ্ণচন্দ্র রায় হাস্য করিয়া নিবেদন করিলেন মহাশয়েরা সকলেই প্রধান মনুষ্য আপনকারা আমাকে অনুমতি করিতেছেন পরামর্শ দিতে এ বড় আশ্চর্য্য সে যে হউক আমি নিবেদন করি তাহা শ্রবণ করুন আমারদিগের দেশাধিকারী যিনি ইনি জবন ইহার দৌরাত্ম্যক্রমে আপনারা ব্যস্ত হইয়া উপায়ান্তর চিন্তা করিতেছেন। সমভিব্যাহৃত মীরজাফরালি খাঁ সাহেব ইনিও জাতে জবন অতএব আমার আশ্চর্য্য বোধ হইতেছে। এই কথার পর সকলে হাস্য করিয়া কহিলেন হাঁ ইনি জবন বটেন কিন্তু ইহাঁর প্রকৃতি অতি উত্তম আপনি ইহাঁকে সন্দেহ করিবেন না পশ্চাৎ কৃষ্ণচন্দ্র রায় নিবেদন করিলেন এ দেশের উপর বুঝি ঈশ্বরের নিগ্রহ হইয়াছে নতুবা এক কালীন এত হয় না প্রথম যিনি দেশাধিকারী ইহাঁর সর্ব্বদা পরানিষ্ট চিন্তা এবং যেখানে শুনেন সুন্দরী স্ত্রী আছে তাহা বলক্রমে গ্রহণ করেন এবং কিঞ্চিৎ অপরাধে জাতি প্রাণ নষ্ট করেন দ্বিতীয় বর্গী আসিয়া দেশ লুট করে তাহাতে মনোযোগ নাই তৃতীয় সন্ন্যাসী আসিয়া যাহার উত্তম ঘর দেখে তাহাই ভাঙ্গিয়া কাষ্ঠ করে তাহা কেহ নিবারণ করে না অশেষ প্রকার এ দেশে উৎপাত হইয়াছে অতএব দেশের কর্ত্তা জবন থাকিলে কাহারু ধর্ম্ম থাকিবে না এবং জাতিও থাকিবে না অতএব ঈশ্বরের নিগ্রহ না হইলে এত

উৎপাত হয় না আমি এ কারণ অনেক ২ বিশিষ্ট লোককে কহিয়াছি তোমরা সকলে ঈশ্বরের আরাধনা বিশিষ্টরূপে কর যেন আর উৎপাত না হয় এবং জবন অধিকারী না থাকে আমা ২ জাতি ধর্ম্ম রক্ষা পায় এইরূপ ব্যবহার আমি সর্ব্বদাই করিতেছি অতএব নিবেদন করি ঈশ্বর সৃষ্ট করিয়াছেন নষ্ট করিবেন না কিন্তু এক সুপরামর্শ আছে আমি নিবেদন করি যদি সকলের পরামর্শ সিদ্ধ হয় তবে তাহার চেষ্টা পাইতে পারি। তখন সকলে জিজ্ঞাসা করিলেন কি পরামর্শ কহ রাজা কৃষ্ণচন্দ্র রায় কহিলেন সকলে মনোযোগ করিয়া শ্রবণ করুন। এ দেশের অধিকারী সর্ব্বপ্রকারে উত্তম হন এবং অন্য জাতি ও এতদ্দেশীয় না হন তবেই মঙ্গল হয়। জগৎসেট প্রভৃতি কহিলেন এমন কে তাহা বিস্তারিয়া কহ রাজা কহিলেন বিলাতে নিবাস জাতে ইঙ্গরাজ কলিকাতায় কোঠি করিয়া আছেন যদি তাঁহারা এ রাজ্যের রাজা হন তবে সকল মঙ্গল হবেক। ইহা শুনিয়া সকলেই কহিলেন তাঁহারদিগের কি ২ গুণ আছে রাজা কৃষ্ণচন্দ্র রায় কহিলেন তাঁহারদিগের গুণ এই ২ সকল সত্যবাদী জিতেন্দ্রিয় পরহিংসা করেন না যোদ্ধা অতি বড় প্রজা প্রতি যথেষ্ট দয়া এবং অত্যন্ত ক্ষমতাপন্ন বুদ্ধিতে বৃহস্পতির ন্যায় ধনেতে কুবের তুল্য ধার্ম্মিক এবং অর্জ্জুনের ন্যায় পরাক্রম প্রজাপালনে সাক্ষাৎ যুধিষ্ঠির এবং সকলে ঐক্যতাপন্ন শিষ্টের পালন দুষ্টের দমন রাজার সকল গুণ তাঁহারদিগের আছে অতএব যদি তাঁহারা এ দেশাধিকারী হন তবে সকলের নিস্তার নতুবা জবনে সকল নষ্ট করিবেক। এই কথার পর জগৎসেট কহিলেন তাঁহারা উত্তম বটেন তাহা আমি জ্ঞাত আছি কিন্তু তাঁহারদিগের বাক্য আমরাও বুঝিতে পারি না ও আমাদিগের বাক্য তাঁহারাও বুঝিতে পারেন না ইহার পর রাজা কৃষ্ণচন্দ্র রায় কহিলেন এখন তাঁহারা কলিকাতায় কোঠি করিয়া বাণিজ্য করিতেছেন সেই কলিকাতার দক্ষিণে কালীঘাট নামে এক স্থান আছে তাহাতে কালীঠাকুরাণী আছেন আমি মধ্যে ২ কালী পূজার কারণ গিয়া থাকি সেই কালে কলিকাতার কোঠির যিনি বড় সাহেব তাঁহার সহিত সাক্ষাৎ করিয়া থাকি ইহাতেই তাঁহার চরিত্র আমি সমস্তই জ্ঞাত আছি। এই কথার পর রাজা রাম-

নারায়ণ কহিলেন আপনি মধ্যে ২ কলিকাতার কোঠির বড় সাহেবের সঙ্গে সাক্ষাৎ করেন কিন্তু তাঁহার বাক্য কি প্রকারে আপনি বুঝেন আর আপনকার কথা তিনি বা কি প্রকারে জ্ঞাত হন। এই কথার উত্তর রাজা কৃষ্ণচন্দ্র রায় কহিলেন কলিকাতায় অনেক ২ বিশিষ্ট লোকের বসতি আছে তাঁহারা সকলে ইঙ্গরাজী ভাষা অভ্যাস করিয়াছেন। এবং সেই সকল বিশিষ্ট মনুষ্য সাহেবের চাকর আছেন তাঁহারাই বুঝাইয়া দেন। ইহা শুনিয়া সকলে কহিলেন ইহাঁরা দেশের কর্ত্তা হইলে সকল রক্ষা পায় অতএব আপনি কলিকাতায় গমন করিয়া যে সকল কথা উপস্থিত হইল এই সকল বৃত্তান্ত কোঠির বড় সাহেবের নিকট জ্ঞাত করাইবা তিনি যেমন ২ কহেন বিস্তারিত আমারদের কহিবা এবং তিনি প্রতিজ্ঞা করিবেন তাঁহারা দেশাধিকারী হইলে আমারদিগের এ রাজ্যের প্রতুল করিবেন আর এখন যে ২ কার্য্য আমারদিগের আছে ইহাতেই রাখিবেন। এই কথার পরে রাজা কৃষ্ণচন্দ্র রায় কহিলেন তাঁহারা দেশাধিকারী হইবেন রাজ্যের প্রতুল রাখিলেই রাজার প্রতুল হয় আমাদের এ কথা কহনে আবশ্যক নাই তবে যে কথা কহিলেন আপনার দিগের যে যে কার্য্য আছে ইহাতে নিযুক্ত রাখিবেন তাহার কোন সন্দেহ মহাশয়েরা করিবেন না তাঁহারদিগের রাজ্য হইলেই সুখী সকল লোক হইবেক কিন্তু আপনারা আমাকে নিতান্ত স্থির করিয়া আজ্ঞা করুন। পরে সকলেই কহিলেন এই স্থির হইল আপনি কলিকাতায় গমন করুন ইহা বলিয়া রাজা কৃষ্ণচন্দ্র রায়কে বিদায় করিয়া সকলে স্ব স্ব স্থানে প্রস্থান করিলেন।

Mṛtyuñjay Bidyālaṅkār.

The name of Mṛtyuñjay Bidyālaṅkār, for many years the chief Pundit of the College of Fort William and for some time Carey's own Munsi, whom Home has immortalised in Carey's portrait[1], is an important one in the literary history of this period. Nothing practically is known about his life, but he is said to have

[1] A likeness of this will be found in William's *Serampore Letters* (1800-1816). It may be remarked here that Mṛtyuñjay's

been born in 1762 at Midnapore (then included in Orissa) and educated at Natore. In physique and knowledge, he has been compared to Dr. Johnson, and he was held in high and deserved estimation.. In the English preface to *Prabodh-chandrikā* which was edited in 1833 after Mṛtyuñjay's death, Marshman eulogises the learned pundit as "one of the most profound scholars of the age." "At the head of the establishment of Pundits," Marshman writes elsewhere[1], "stood Mrityunjoy, who although a native of Orissa,[2] usually regarded as the Bertia of the country, was a colossus of literature.[3] He bore a strong resemblance to our great lexicographer not only by his stupendous acquirements and the soundness of his critical judgments but also in his rough features and his unwieldly figure. His knowledge of the Sanscrit

Marshman's tribute.

title was *Bangālākār* and not *Tarkālankār* as mentioned by Dinesh Chandra Sen in *History* (p. 886). See Roebuck, *op. cit.* App. II, p. 29; also Smith, *op. cit.* p. 170.

[1] *History of Serampore Mission*.

[2] Mṛtyuñjay seems to have been as proficient in the Odiyā dialect as in Bengali. It was his help that enabled Carey to translate the Scriptures into the Odiyā dialect. (Smith, *op. cit.* p. 190).

[3] In this connexion, M. M. Haraprasād Śāstrī, in the lecture referred to before, speaks of Mṛtyuñjay as an Odiyā but it might be noted here that although born in a province of Orissa, it is very doubtful whether Mṛtyunjay was really an Odiya. From the edition of his work *Rajabali*, published in 1889 by a person calling himself the writer's grandson, it seems that he belonged to the Chattopadhyay class of Bengali Brahmans for the title-page of the aforesaid edition says —"গ্রন্থকারের পৌত্র শ্রীবেহারি লাল চট্টোপাধ্যায় কর্ত্তৃক রাজা রাজবল্লভ ষ্ট্রীট ৫২ নং ভবন হইতে প্রকাশিত। পঞ্চম সংস্করণ।" Rām-mohan Ray, again, (*Works*, Panini Office Reprint, p 646) calls Mṛtyuñjay a Bhattacharyya and his controversy with the Pundit is styled by himself as ভট্টাচার্য্যের সহিত বিচার। Mṛtyuñjay was a Rādhiya Brahman (পশ্চিম চাটুতি শ্রেণীর সন্তান।)

classics was unrivalled, and his Bengali composition has never been superseded for ease, simplicity and vigour.

Relation to Carey.

Mr. Carey sat under his instruction two or three hours daily while in Calcutta, and the effect of this intercourse was speedily visible in the superior accuracy and purity of his translations"[1]. He was specially attached to Carey and it was at Carey's suggestion that he undertook the literary works which constitute his chief contribution to Bengali literature and language.[2]

His works.

The literary labours of Mṛtyuñjay, embracing almost the whole of this decade (1802-1813), consist, besides a Defence of Idolatory and a treatise on the Hindu Law of Inheritance[3], of the following four publications, of which

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[1] Carey never, however, was influenced by Mṛtyuñjay's pompous, affected, sanscritised language. His native instinct for realism saved him from this extreme.

[2] Mṛtyuñjay was also one of the jurists of the Supreme Court; and when the agitation about *Satī* was at its height and the whole body of law-pundits wrote of it as "permitted," Mṛtyuñjay gave his opinion that, according to Hinduism, a life of mortification rather self-immolation was the law for a widow.

[3] Rev. J. Long, *Return of the Names and Writings of 515 Persons connected with Bengali Literature* (1855), p. 135. This work, *Defence of Idolatory*, as mentioned by Long, seems to have been the same as the *Bedānta Chandrikā* against which Rām-mohan Rāy wrote his ভট্টাচার্য্যের সহিত বিচার (1817) and his English tract "A Second Defence of the Monotheistical System of the Veds in Reply to an Apology for the present State of Hindu Worship" (1817). Says Miss Collet: "Another defendant of Hinduism appeared some months later in the Head Pundit of the Government College at Calcutta, Mrityunjoy Vidyalankar, who published a tract called *Vedanta Chandrika*" (*Life and Letters of Raja Rammohan Roy*, p. 23. See also Nagendranāth Chatterji, *Life of Rāmmohan Rāy* in Bengali, p. 103). The *Bedānta Chandrikā* was printed both in Bengali and in English, and defended the current form of idolatorous Hinduism against Rām-mohan's party. It shows

two are original works and two translations from Sanscrit. :—

1 *Batris Sinhāsan*, 1802.
2 *Hitopades*, 1808. 2nd Ed. 1814. 3rd Ed. 1821.
3 *Rājābalī*, 1808.
4 *Prabodh Chandrikā*, 1813.

Translations.

Batris Sinhāsan is a close translation in plain simple Bengali of a very popular and well-known Sanscrit work which is sometimes supposed to be of Buddhistic origin, sometimes attributed to no less a writer than Kālidāsa.[1] The title literally means means the *thirty-two thrones* but it should be rather the *thirty-two images of Bikramāditya's*

Batris Sinhāsan.

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all the scholarship and sincerity of an orthodox pundit, but at the same time it is marked by a deplorable tone of violence and personal rancour.

[1] The first edition (which is in the Imperial Library, Calcutta) bears the following title-page: বত্রিশ সিংহাসন। সংগ্রহ ভাষাতে। মৃত্যুঞ্জয় শর্ম্মণা ক্রিয়তে। শ্রীরামপুরে ছাপা হইল। ১৮০২ pp 210. The copy in the British Museum Library bears the following title-page; বত্রিশ সিংহাসন। মৃত্যুঞ্জয় শর্ম্মণা ক্রিয়তে। ১৮০৮। Roebuck, *op cit* having apparently seen this edition gives 1808 as the date of its first publication; and this has been the usual date given by those who follow him (e g Long, Ratn-gati Nyāyaratna etc) But Buchanan, *op. cit.* in 1805 mentions this publication at p 222, though he gives no exact date. The title-page of the London reprint says শ্রীবিক্রমাদিত্যের বত্রিশ পুত্তলিকা সিংহাসন সংগ্রহ বাঙ্গালা ভাষাতে। শ্রীমৃত্যুঞ্জয় শর্ম্মণা রচিত। লন্দন মহানগরেতে ছাপা হইল। ১৮১৬। The edition in the Library of the Board of Examiners (London reprint) also bears 1816 as the date of publication. The Baitgabāsi reprint is from the latter edition but some alterations in spelling etc., make the book less valuable to the student. Similar remarks apply to its edition of *Prabodh-chandrikā* and *Rājābalī*. There was a Śrīrāmpur reprint in 1818 as is evident from the entry in the *Catalogue of the Calcutta Public Library* (1898) and another reprint as late as 1854 as the copy in the Sāhitya Parisat Library and entry in the *Catalogue of Bengali*

throne.[1] Each of these images is introduced as telling a story descriptive of the princely character of that King, and showing that a prince worthy of succeeding him cannot be found. The earlier style of Mṛtyuñjay, as displayed in this work, if not superior to that of some of his contemporaries, was certainly less affected and pedantic than his later style, although somewhat sanscritised. It presents a great contrast indeed in language and manner at once to Carey's *Dialogues* as well as to *Pratāpāditya-charitra* published only a year before itself and *Lipimālā* published in the same year. As on the one hand, it is marked by a total absence of Persian influence and a decided tendency to sanscriticised style, so on the other, by its preference of the classical language, it rises superior to the colloquialism and flatness of the *Dialogues*. The story with its framework is well-known. When Bikramāditya dies, his throne, the precious gift of Indra who was pleased with the King's excellent qualities, is buried, and for a long time remains hidden. Many years afterwards, a peasant cultivating his land discovers that, when sitting on a platform in the midst of his field, he becomes endowed with the qualities of great discernment and decision. By the direction of Bhoja, the reigning monarch of the country, the ground is dug up, and the lost throne is duly discovered underneath the platform. When the king, in the midst of a large circle of courtiers is about to take his seat there, the first image informs him, that without Bikramāditya's qualities,

Printed Books in the British Museum show (p. 67). The London ed. of 1834 is also mentioned in the *Catalogue of the Library of the East India College*.

[1] It is also sometimes known as *Bikramacharitra*, because King Bikrama is the hero, tales of whose prowess and virtue are told by the thirty-two images of his charmed throne discovered by Bhoja.

he is unworthy to occupy Bikramāditya's throne. Explanation ensues: and a story is told by each one of the thirty-two images in succession, illustrative of the former king's great and good qualities and implying that a worthy successor to him has not yet been born amongst the sons of men. It is one of the most interesting collections of fables of this period [1] and the following extract from the beginning, relating to the finding and disposing of the magic throne, will serve as a specimen of its descriptive and narrative manner—

The opening passage on the Discovery of the Throne, quoted.

দৈবলৌকিকোভয় সামর্থ সম্পন্ন শ্রীবিক্রমাদিত্য নামে এক রাজাধিরাজ হইয়াছিলেন। দেবপ্রসাদলব্ধ দ্বাত্রিংশৎ পুত্তলিকাযুক্ত রত্নময় এক সিংহাসন তাহার বসিবার ছিল। ঐ শ্রীবিক্রমাদিত্য রাজার স্বর্গারোহণ পরে সেই সিংহাসনে বসিবার উপযুক্ত পাত্র কেহ না থাকাতে সিংহাসন মৃত্তিকার মধ্যে প্রোথিত হইয়াছিল। কিছু কাল পরে শ্রীভোজরাজার অধিকারের সময়ে ঐ সিংহাসন প্রকাশ হইল। তাহার উপাখ্যানের বিস্তার এই।—

দক্ষিণ দেশে ধারা নামে এক পুরী ছিল সেই নগরের নিকটে সম্বদকর নামে এক সস্যক্ষেত্র থাকে তাহার কৃষকের নাম যজ্ঞদত্ত। সেই কৃষক সস্যক্ষেত্রের চতুর্দিগে পরিখা করিয়া শাল তাল তমাল পিয়াল হিন্তাল বকুল আম্র আম্রাতক চম্পক অশোক কিংশুক বক গুবাক নারিকেল নাগকেশর মাধবী মালতী যূথী জাতী সেবতী কদলী দাড়িমী তগর কুন্দ মল্লিকা দেবদারু প্রভৃতি নানান জাতীয় বৃক্ষ রোপণ করিয়া এক উদ্যান করিয়া আপনি সেই উদ্যানের মধ্যে থাকেন। সেই উপবনের নিকট নিবড় (নিবিড়) ভয়ানক বন ছিল সে বন হইতে হস্তী ব্যাঘ্র মহিষ গণ্ডার বানর বনশূকর শশক ভল্লুক হরিণ আদি অনেক পশু জন্তু আসিয়া সস্য নষ্ট প্রত্যহ করে। এজন্য যজ্ঞদত্ত অত্যন্ত উদ্বিগ্ন হইয়া সস্যরক্ষার কারণ ক্ষেত্রের

[1] Yates gives no less than 14 stories from this book in his selection and Haughton gives 4

মধ্যে এক মঞ্চ করিয়া আপনি তথাতে থাকিল মঞ্চের উপরে যতক্ষণ বসিয়া থাকে তৎক্ষণ রাজাধিরাজের যেমত প্রতাপ ও শাসন ও মন্ত্রণা সেইমত প্রতাপ ও শাসন ও মন্ত্রণা কৃষক করে যখন মঞ্চ হইতে নামে তখন জড়ের প্রায় থাকি (থাকে)। ইহা দেখিয়া কৃষকের পরিজন লোকেরা বড়ই বিস্মিত হইয়া পরস্পর কহে এ কি আশ্চর্য্য। এই বৃত্তান্ত (বৃত্তান্ত) লোকপরম্পরাতে ধারাপুরীর রাজা ভোজ শুনিলেন। অনন্তর রাজা কৌতুকাবিষ্ট হইয়া মন্ত্রি সামন্ত সৈন্য সেনাপতির সহিত মঞ্চের নিকটে গিয়া কৃষকের ব্যবহর (ব্যবহার) প্রত্যক্ষ দেখিয়া আপনকার অত্যন্ত বিশ্বাসপাত্র এক মন্ত্রিকে মঞ্চের উপরে বসাইলেন। সেই মন্ত্রী যাবত মঞ্চের উপরে থাকে তাবত রাজাধিরাজের প্রায় প্রতাপ ও শাসন ও মন্ত্রণা করে। ইহা দেখিয়া রাজা চমৎকৃত হইয়া বিচার করিলেন যে এ শক্তি মঞ্চের নয় এবং কৃষকেরো নয় এবং মন্ত্রির নয় কিন্তু এ স্থানের মধ্যে চমৎকার কোনহ বস্ত (বস্তু) আছেন তাহারি শক্তিতে কৃষকে রাজাধিরাজপ্রায় হয়। ইহা নিশ্চয় করিয়া দ্রব্যের উদ্ধার কারণ সেই স্থান খনন করিতে মহা রাজা আজ্ঞা দিলেন। আজ্ঞা পাইয়া ভৃত্যবর্গেরা খনন করিল তৎপর সেই স্থান হইতে প্রবল (প্রবাল) মুক্তা মানিক্য হীরক সূর্য্যকান্ত চন্দ্রকান্ত নীলকান্ত পদ্মরাগ মনিগণেতে জড়িত বত্রিশ পুত্তলিকাতে শোভিত তেজোময় এক দিব্য রত্নসিংহাসন উঠিলেন। সেই সিংহাসনের তেজে রাজা ও রাজার পরিজন লোকেরা সিংহাসন প্রতি অবলোকন করিতে পারিলেন না। তৎপর রাজা হৃষ্টচিত্ত হইয়া আপনার রাজধানীতে সিংহাসন আনয়নের ইচ্ছা করিয়া ভৃত্যবর্গের দিগে আজ্ঞা করিলেন। আজ্ঞা পাইয়া ভৃত্যবর্গোরা (বর্গেরা) সিংহাসন চালন কারণ অনেক যত্ন করিল সে স্থান হইতে সিংহাসন লড়িল না। তৎপর আকাশবাণী হইল যে হে রাজা নানাবিধ বস্ত্র অলঙ্কার আদি উপকরণ দিয়া এ সিংহাসনের পূজা বলিদান হোম কর তবে সিংহাসন উঠিবে তাহা শুনিয়া রাজা সেইরূপ করাতে সিংহাসন অনায়াসে উঠিলেন।

তৎপর ধারানামে নিজ রাজধানীতে সিংহাসন আনিয়া স্বর্ণ রূপ্য প্রবাল স্ফটিকময় স্তম্ভতে শোভিত রাজসভা স্থানের মধ্যে স্থাপিত

করিলেন। পরে রাজা সেই সিংহাসনে বসিতে ইচ্ছা করিয়া পণ্ডিত-লোকেরদিগকে আনাইয়া শুভক্ষণ নিরূপণ করিয়া ভৃত্যবর্গেরদিগকে অভিষেক সামগ্রী আয়োজন করিতে আজ্ঞা করিলেন। ভৃত্যবর্গেরা আজ্ঞা পাইয়া দধি দুর্ব্বা চন্দন পুষ্প অগোর কুঙ্কম গোরোচনা ছত্র তরাস চামর ময়রপুচ্ছ অস্ত্রশস্ত্র পতিপুত্রবতী স্ত্রীগণের হস্তেতে দর্পণাদি অধিবাস সামগ্রী সপ্তদ্বীপা পৃথিবীর চিহ্নেতে চিত্রিত এক ব্যাঘ্র চর্ম্ম এই সকল শাস্ত্রোক্ত রাজাভিষেক সামগ্রী আয়োজন করিয়া রাজার নিকটে নিবেদন করিল। তৎপর শ্রীভোজরাজা গুরু পুরোহিত প্রতি ব্রাহ্মণ পণ্ডিতবর্গ মন্ত্রি সামন্ত সৈন্য সেনাপতিতে বেষ্টিত হইয়া সিংহাসনে বসিয়া অভিষিক্ত হবার নিমিত্তে সিংহাসনের নিকটে উপস্থিত হইলেন ইত্যবসারে (ইত্যবসরে) সিংহাসনের প্রথম পুত্তলিকা রাজাকে কহিতে লাগিলেন। হে রাজা শুন যে রাজা গুণবান অত্যন্ত ধনবান অতিশয় দাতা অত্যন্ত দয়ালু অতিবড় শূর সাত্বিক স্বভাব সদা উৎসাহশাল প্রবল প্রতাপ হন সেই রাজা এই সিংহাসনে বসিবার যোগ্য অন্য সামান্য রাজা উপযুক্ত নয়। ইহা শুনিয়া রাজা কহিলেন হে পুত্তলিকা আমি যাচঞা মাত্রে উপযুক্ত পাত্র বুঝিয়া সাদ্ধ লক্ষ সুবর্ণ দি অতএব আমা হইতে আধিক (অধিক) দাতা পৃথিবীতে অন্য কে আছে। ইহা শুনিয়া পুত্তলিকা উপহাস কিরয়া (করিয়া) কহিলেন। হে রাজা শুন যে লোক মহত হয় সে আপনার গুণ আপনি বর্ণনা করে না তুমি আপন গুণ আপনি ব্যাখ্যা করিলে ইহাতেই বুঝিলাম তুমি অতি ক্ষুদ্র।[1]

Hitopadés.

Mṛtyuñjay's next work of translation was that of *Hitopadés*. The Sanscrit *Hitopadés*, than which there might be greater books in the world but none perhaps which has a more interesting literary history, seems to have, with strange prescience, gauged the literary or amusive requirements not only of its own but also of times to follow: and consequently it seems to have always possessed a peculiar fascination for a host of translators of all periods

[1] pp. 2-8.

of literary history. There are some half a dozen or more translations of this work between 1800 and 1850, and it is not necessary to bring under review all of them. But this version being the work of Mṛtyuñjay possesses a peculiar interest of its own. Long gives 1801 as the date of its publication: but from internal evidence of language and manner it seems that the date is a too early one. We have not been able to obtain sight of the first edition in order to verify the date [1]: but the work seems to have been composed later than as Golak-nāth *Hitopadeś* and exemplifies Mṛtyuñjay's earlier style. It would be interesting to compare Golak-nāth's language as shown in the specimen quoted at p. 183 *et seq.* with that

Its date.

Its language and style compared to those of Golak-nāth.

[1] The copy I use is a third reprint at Śrīrāmpur (1814) and bears the following title-page: পঞ্চতন্ত্র প্রভৃতি নীতিশাস্ত্র হইতে উদ্ধৃত। মিত্রলাভ সুহৃদ্ভেদ বিগ্রহ সন্ধি। এতচ্চতষ্টয়াবয়ব বিশিষ্ট হিতোপদেশ। বিষ্ণুশর্ম্ম কর্ত্তৃক সংগৃহীত। বাঙ্গালা ভাষাতে। মৃত্যুঞ্জয় শর্ম্মণা ক্রিয়ত। শ্রীরামপুরে তৃতীয় বার ছাপা হইল। ১৮১৪। pp. 1–146. I have not been able to get the first edition of this work. The copy in the British Museum Library (Blumhardt, *Catalogue*, p. 67 and p. 115) of the second edition bears 1814 as the date of publication. 3rd Ed. 1821. It would appear from Dinesh Chandra Sen, *Baṅga Sāhitya Parichay* or *Selection from Bengali Literature*, pt. ii (1914) p. 1727, that the first edition was published in 1801. But this is incorrect; this is the date of the first edition of Golak-nāths *Hitopadeś*. There is mention of a "Hitopadeshu in Bengali 8vo. Serampore 1808" in the *Catalogue of the Library of the East India College*. But in the *Catalogue of the Library of the Hon. East India Company*, we find an entry of "Hitopadeshu or Salutary Instructions. 8vo. Serampore. 1808" without any mention of the name of the author and of an edition apparently of Golak-nāth'a earlier *Hitopadeś* (1801). From the Tenth *Memoir*, relative to Serampore translation (Appendix), it is clear that the first edition of Mṛtyuñjay's *Hitopadeś* was published in 1808, and therefore the anonymous entry in the *Catalogue of the East India College* above noted must refer to this work.

of Mṛtyuñjay in the following extract, bearing upon the same part of the story.[1]

পুস্তকারম্ভে রিপুবিনাশের নিমিত্তে প্রথমতঃ প্রার্থনারূপ মঙ্গলাচরণ করিতেছেন।

জাহ্নবীর ফেণরেখার ন্যায় চন্দ্রকলা যাহার মস্তকে আছেন সে শিবের অনুগ্রহেতে সাধুলোকের দিগের সাধ্য কর্ম্ম সিদ্ধ হউক।

এত যে এই হিতোপদেশ ইতি সংস্কৃত বাক্যেতে পটুতা ও সর্ব্বত্র বাক্যের বৈচিত্র্য ও নীতিবিদ্যা দেন। প্রাজ্ঞ লোক অজর ও অমরের ন্যায় হইয়া বিদ্যা এবং অর্থ চিন্তা করিবেক। আর যমকর্ত্তৃক কেশে গৃহীতের মত হইয়া ধর্ম্মাচরণ করিবেক। আর সকল দ্রব্যের মধ্যে বিদ্যাই অত্যুত্তম দ্রব্য ইহা পণ্ডিতেরা কহিয়াছেন যেহেতুক বিদ্যার সর্ব্বকালে চৌরাদি কর্ত্তৃক অহরণীয়ত্ব ও অমূল্যত্ব ও অক্ষয়ত্ব। আর বিদ্যা যদি নাচলাকের হয় তবে সেই মনুষ্যকে দুষ্প্রাপ্য রাজাকে পাওয়ান। যেমন নাচণা নদী দুষ্প্রাপ্য সমুদ্রকে পাওয়ান রাজার সঙ্গে মেলন হেতুক বিদ্যা উৎকৃষ্ট ভাগ্য পাওয়ান। বিদ্যা বিনয় দেন বিনয়েতে পাত্রতা পায় পাত্রতা হইতে ধন পায় ধন হইতে ধর্ম্ম পায় ধর্ম্ম হইতে সুখ পায়। শস্ত্র বিদ্যা ও শাস্ত্র বিদ্যা এই দুই বিদ্যা প্রতিপত্তির নিমিত্তে হন কিন্তু আদ্যা শস্ত্রবিদ্যা বৃদ্ধাবস্থাতে হাস্যের নিমিত্তে হয় দ্বিতীয়া শাস্ত্রবিদ্যা সর্ব্বকালে আদরণীয়া হন অপর যেহেতুক নূতন পাত্রে সংলগ্ন যে চিহ্ন সে অন্যথা হয় না সেই হেতুক গল্পের ছলেতে বালকের সম্বন্ধে এ গ্রন্থে নীতি কহা যাইতেছে মিত্রলাভ ও সুহৃদ্ভেদ ও বিগ্রহ ও সন্ধি এতচ্চতুষ্টয়াত্মক নীতিশাস্ত্র পঞ্চতন্ত্র হইতে ও আর ২ গ্রন্থ হইতে আকর্ষণ করিয়া লিখা যাইতেছে।—

ভাগীরথী তীরে পাটলিপুত্র নামে নগর আছে সেখানে সকল রাজগুণে যুক্ত সুদর্শন নামে রাজা ছিলেন সেই ভূপতি এক সময় কাহারও কর্ত্তৃক পঠ্যমান শ্লোকদ্বয় শ্রবণ করিলেন তাহার অর্থ এই অনেক সন্দেহের নাশক এবং অপ্রত্যক্ষ বিষয়ের জ্ঞাপক যে শাস্ত্র সে সকলের চক্ষু ইহা যাহার নাই সে অন্ধ। আর যৌবন ও ধনসম্পত্তি ও

[1] হিতোপদেশ, pp. 3-8.

প্রভুত্ব ও অবিবেকতা এই চতুষ্টয় প্রত্যেকেও অনর্থের নিমিত্ত হয় যেখানে এ চতুষ্টয় সেখানে কি হয় কহিতে পারি না। ইহা শুনিয়া সে রাজা অজ্ঞাতশাস্ত্র এবং সর্ব্বদা বিপথগামী আপন পুত্রেরদিগের শাস্ত্র বিজ্ঞাপনার্থে উদ্বিগ্নচিত্ত হইয়া চিন্তা করিলেন। যে পুত্র পণ্ডিত ও ধার্ম্মিক নয় সে পুত্র হওয়াতে কি প্রয়োজন বরং অনর্থ হয় যেমন কাণচক্ষুতে কিছু প্রয়োজন নাই প্রত্যুত কাণচক্ষু কেবল পীড়ারি কারণ। এবং অজাত মৃত ও মূর্খ ইহার মধ্যে আদ্যদ্বয় ভাল অন্তিম ভাল নয় যেহেতুক আদ্যদ্বয় একবার দুঃখদায়ক হয় অন্তিম পুনঃ পদে পদে দুঃখদায়ক হয়। অপর গর্ভস্রাবও ভাল স্ত্রীঅভিগমন না করাও ভাল জন্মিয়া মরাও ভাল কন্যা হওয়াও ভাল ভার্য্যা বন্ধ্যা হওয়াও ভাল গর্ভ হইতে ভূমিষ্ঠ না হওয়াও ভাল রূপ ও ধনসমূহবিশিষ্ঠ মূর্খ পুত্র কিছু নয়। এবং যে পুত্র জন্মিলে বংশ উন্নতি পায় সে জন্মুক নতুবা জন্মমরণ ধর্ম্মশালি সংসারে কে মরিয়া না জন্মে। অপর গুণিসমূহ গণনারম্ভে সম্ভ্রমেতে খড়ী যাহার না পড়ে সে পুত্রেতে মাতা যদি পুত্রবতী হয় তবে কহ বন্ধ্যা কেমন হয়। এবং দান ও তপস্যা ও শৌর্য্য ও বিদ্যা ও ধনার্জনেতে যাহার মন সচেষ্ট না হয় সে মাতার বিষ্ঠা মাত্র। গুণবান এক পুত্রও ভাল শত শত মূর্খ পুত্রের প্রয়োজন নাই যেমন এক চন্দ্র অন্ধকার নষ্ট করেন তারা সমূহ কিছু করিতে পারে না। ..... ইহা চিন্তা করিয়া রাজা পণ্ডিত সভা করাইলেন অনন্তর রাজা কহিলেন ভো ভো পণ্ডিতেরা আমার কথা শ্রবণ করুন। আছে কেহ এমন পণ্ডিত যে নিত্যবিপথগামি ও অবিদিতশাস্ত্র আমার পুত্রেরদের এখন নীতি শাস্ত্রোপদেশদ্বারা পুনর্জন্ম করাইতে সমর্থ হয়। যে হেতুক কাঞ্চন সংসর্গেতে কাঁচ যেমন মরকতের দ্যুতি ধারণ করে তেমন পণ্ডিত সন্নিধানেতে মূর্খও প্রবীণত্ব পায়। পণ্ডিতেরদের কর্তৃক সে প্রকার উক্ত হইয়াছে। হীন লোকেরদের সহিত বাসেতে মতি হীনা হয় এবং স্বসমান লোকেরদের সহিত বাসেতে মতি সমতাকে পায় এবং উত্তম লোকেরদের সহিত বাসেতে মতি উত্তমতাকে পায়। ইহার মধ্যে বৃহস্পতিতুল্য

সকল নীতিশাস্ত্রের যথার্থজ্ঞাতা বিষ্ণুশর্ম্ম নামে পণ্ডিত কহিলেন হে মহারাজ সৎকুলোদ্ভব এই রাজপুত্রেরা এই হেতুক আমা হইতে নীতিশাস্ত্র গ্রহণ করিতে শক্ত হইবেন যেহেতুক কোন ক্রিয়া অস্থানে পতিতা হইলে ফলবতী হয় না যেমন নানাপ্রকার যত্নেতে শুকপক্ষির ন্যায় বক পাঠিত হয় না। আর এ গোত্রে নির্গুণ সন্তান জন্মে না যেহেতুক পদ্মরাগমণির আকরেতে কাঁচমণির জন্ম কোথায় এই হেতুক আমি ছয় মাসের মধ্যে তোমার পুত্রেরদিগকে নীতিশাস্ত্রজ্ঞ করিব।

রাজা পুনর্ব্বার বিনয়পূর্ব্বক কহিলেন পুষ্পসহবাসেতে কীটও সল্লোকের মস্তকে আরোহণ করে এবং সল্লোকেরদের কর্তৃক সুপ্রতিষ্ঠিত প্রস্তরও দেবত্ব পায়। আর যেমন উদয়াচলস্থ দ্রব্য সূর্য্যসন্নিধানে দীপ্তি পায় তেমনি সৎসন্নিধানেতে হীনবর্ণও দীপ্তি পায় সেই হেতুক এই আমার পুত্রেরদিগকে নীতিশাস্ত্রোপদেশের নিমিত্ত তোমরাই প্রমাণ হইয়াছে। ইহা কহিয়া সেই বিষ্ণুশর্ম্মার বহুসম্মানপূর্ব্বক পুত্রেরদিগকে সমর্পণ করিলেন।

Original works.

Rājābalī, 1808.

From a literary point of view, however, Mṛtyuñjay's two original works, *Rājābalī* and *Prabodh-chandrikā* are more interesting; and of these, *Rājābalī*, both in form and matter, is no doubt the better work. *Rājābalī* as its name implies, is the 'history of the kings' who ruled in this country from the earliest time, and its full title will sufficiently explain its scope[1] :—

[1] The description of this work in Dinesh Chandra Sen's *History* (p. 888) as "the history of India from the earliest time down to Timur" is clearly a mistake: for the history is brought down to recent times viz. the time of the British occupation of Bengal. The title-page given in the text above is that of later editions but in the first edition the title-page simply says :—রাজাবলী। সংগ্রহ ভাষাতে। মৃত্যুঞ্জয় শর্ম্মণা ক্রিয়তে। শ্রীরামপুরে ছাপা হইল। ১৮০৮। pp. 1-295. Second Ed. Serampore, 1814. Also mentioned as such in the catalogues of the Library of Bard of Examiners, Fort William College; of the Library of the Hon. East India Company; of the Library of the East India College. 4th Ed. Serampore, 1836.

রাজাবলী। অর্থাৎ কলির প্রারম্ভ হইতে ইংরাজের অধিকার পর্য্যন্ত ভারতবর্ষের রাজা ও সম্রাটদের সংক্ষেপ ইতিহাস। The work is, however, based more on tradition than on authentic history. The introductory portion gives the story of the ancient Hindu Kings since the days of Kuruksetra, based mostly on the Paurāṇik accounts and traditionary legends : and of these the account of King Bikramāditya is the longest and most entertaining. The story comes down to the historic times of the Mohammedan conquest and there is some account of Ādiśūr, Ballāl Sen, Laksman Sen of Bengal and Prthu and Jayachandra of Delhi and Kanauj. Then follows a sketch of the Pathan and Mogul kings of Delhi, and of these the stories of Akbar, Jahāngīr, Shāh Jahān and Aurangzeb will be found interesting. These accounts, however, are not strictly historical but there is a considerable infusion of gossip and fiction. The work ends with an account of the British occupation of Bengal after the defeat of Sirājuddaulah, worth comparison with that given by Rājib Lochan in *Rājā Krsna Chandra Rayer Charitra*. The concluding passage is interesting :—এইরূপে নন্দবংশজাত বিশারদ অবধি শাহ্আলম বাদ্শাহ্ পর্য্যন্ত ও মুনইমখাঁ নবাব অবধি নবাব কাসমলী খাঁ পর্য্যন্ত কোন কোন সম্রাট রাজারদের ও নবাবেরদের ও তাঁহারদের চাকর লোকেরদের স্বামিদ্রোহাদি নানাবিধ পাপেতে এই হিন্দুস্থানের বিনাশোন্মুখ হওয়াতে পরমেশ্বরের ইচ্ছামতে ঐ হিন্দুস্থানের রক্ষার্থ আরোপিত কম্পনি বাহাদূরের অধিকাররূপ বৃক্ষের পুষ্পিতত্ব ও ফলিতত্বের সমবধায়ক যে বড়সাহেব তৎকর্তৃক ঐ কম্পনি বাহাদূরের অধিকাররূপ বৃক্ষের আলবালত্বে নিরূপিত পাঠশালার পণ্ডিত শ্রীমৃত্যুঞ্জয় শর্ম্ম কর্তৃক গৌড়ীয় ভাষাতে রচিত রাজতরঙ্গ নামে গ্রন্থ সমাপ্ত হইল। There are numerous anecdotes but the story is presented in a connected form and the style is marked

The scope of the work.

by narrative ease and simplicity, although at places where the author grows serious, it becomes laboured and pedantic. The style of Mṛtyuñjay however has a distinction of its own when contrasted with those of his contemporaries. It shows a decided leaning to Sanscrit words and Sanscritic forms, just as the styles of Carey, Rām Basu, or Chaṇḍīcharaṇ show a return to the colloquial language. In Mṛtyuñjay's writings, there is an attempt to raise the language from the negligence of colloquialism to the dignity and seriousness of a literary language; while in Carey and others, the desire is always to be clear, popular, and useful. But it must be admitted that in the more serious portions of Mṛtyuñjay's writings, the preponderance of Sanscrit words and Sanscrit forms makes the syntax inartistic and the style stiff and unnatural. In the narrative portions, however, this fault disappears, and the general manner in this work although bordering on the pedantic, is indeed interesting, of which the following short passage taken from the account of Pṛthu and Jayachandra will serve as a specimen[1] :—

Its language and manner bordering on the pedantic.

Its sanscritised style contrasted with the plain colloquial styles of Carey and others.

পৃথ্বীরাজার পর যবনেতে যে প্রকারে দিল্লীতে অধিকার করিল তাহা লিখি।—

কান্যকুব্জ দেশের রাজা জয়চন্দ্র রাঠৌর মহাবল পরাক্রম ছিলেন এবং বড় ধনী ছিলেন কাহাকে বলেতে কাহাকে প্রীতিতে এইরূপে প্রায় কুমারিকা খণ্ডস্থ সকল রাজাকে আপন বশীভূত করিয়া ছিলেন তাহার অনঙ্গমঞ্জরী নামে অপূর্ব্ব সুন্দরী এক কন্যা ছিলেন তাঁহার বিবাহের নিমিত্তে যে যে বর উপস্থিত হয় তাহারদের মধ্যে কেহ তাঁহার

An extract from the account of the hostility of Pṛthu and Jayachandra.

[1] pp. 100-106.

মনোনীত হইল না। পরে রাজা এক দিবস উদ্বিগ্ন হইয়া কন্যাকে জিজ্ঞাসা করিলেন যে আমি তোমার বিবাহের নিমিত্তে যে বর উপস্থিত করি সে তোমার মনোনীত হয় না ইহাতে তোমার মনস্থ কি তাহা আমাকে কহ আমি তদনুরূপ করি। রাজকন্যা এই কথা শুনিয়া কহিলেন হে মহারাজ আপনি আমার কর্ত্তা আপনকার যে মনস্থ তাহাই হইতে পারে আমার মনস্থে কি করে তবে আপন মনস্থ যাহা তাহা আজ্ঞানুসারে কহি আপনি সম্প্রতি অতি বড় রাজা যাহা ইচ্ছা করেন তাহাই করিতে পারেন আমি আপনকার কন্যা ইহার মত বিবাহ হইলে বড় ভাল হয় ইহাতে আমি এই মনে করিয়াছি আপনি এক রাজসূয় যজ্ঞ আরম্ভ করুন তাহাতে সকল রাজারদের নিমন্ত্রণ করুন তবে সকল রাজারা অবশ্য আসিবেন সেই রাজারদের মধ্যে আপন মনোনীত যে রাজাকে দেখিব তাহাকে স্বয়ং বরণ করিব। রাজা কন্যার এই বাক্য শুনিয়া রাজসূয় যজ্ঞের আরম্ভ করিয়া সকল রাজারদের নিমন্ত্রণ করিলেন। সে নিমন্ত্রণে কুমারিকাখণ্ডস্থ সকল রাজারা আইলেন কিন্তু দিল্লীর পৃথুরাজার আগমন কালে তাঁহার প্রাচীন এক চাকর তাঁহাকে কহিল হে মহারাজ রাজসূয় যজ্ঞের নিমন্ত্রণে গেলে কররূপে কিছু দিতে হয় আপনি দিল্লীর রাজা আপনি যে অন্য রাজাকে কিছু কর দেন সে ভাল নয় তবে প্রীতিতে যজ্ঞসমাপনার্থে কিছু দিলেও লোকত অপ্রতিষ্ঠা হইবে অতএব এ নিমন্ত্রণে আপনকার যাওয়া উপযুক্ত নয়। রাজা এই কথাতে সে নিমন্ত্রণে আইলেন না। কান্যকুব্জের রাজা জয়চন্দ্র এই কথা শুনিতে পাইয়া অন্তঃকরণে অতি ক্রুদ্ধ হইলেন ও সভাস্থ পণ্ডিত লোকেরদিগকে জিজ্ঞাসা করিলেন দিল্লীর রাজা আইলেন না যজ্ঞ সমাপন কিরূপে হয়। পণ্ডিতেরা কহিলেন রাজসূয় যজ্ঞের অঙ্গ রাজারা হন অঙ্গের অভাবে প্রতিনিধিতেও প্রধান কর্ম্ম সিদ্ধ হয় অতএব দিল্লীর রাজার প্রতিনিধি এক স্বর্ণ প্রতিমা নির্ম্মাণ করুন পূর্ব্বে সূর্য্যবংশীয় রামচন্দ্র নামে এক মহারাজ হইয়াছিলেন তিনি নৈমিষারণ্যে যখন যজ্ঞের আরম্ভ করিয়াছিলেন তাহার পূর্ব্ব কিছু দিন কোনহ কারণেতে আপন স্ত্রী সীতাকে বনবাস দিয়াছিলেন অতএব যজ্ঞ কালে

তাঁহার স্ত্রী ছিলেন না এই প্রযুক্ত বশিষ্ঠ জাবালি প্রভৃতি মহামুনিরা রামচন্দ্রের স্ত্রীর প্রতিনিধিরূপে এক স্বর্ণ প্রতিমা নির্ম্মাণ করাইয়া যজ্ঞ করাইয়াছিলেন আপনিও সেইমত করুন যজ্ঞ আরম্ভ করিয়া সমাপন না করিলে বড়ই দোষ। রাজা পণ্ডিতেরদের এই বাক্যেতে পৃথুরাজার প্রতিনিধিরূপে এক স্বর্ণ প্রতিমা করিয়া ঐ প্রতিমাকে দ্বারিরূপে স্থাপন করিলেন কেননা রাজসূয় যজ্ঞে নিমন্ত্রিত যে যে রাজারা আসিয়া থাকেন তাঁহারা উপযুক্ত মত কেহ কোনহ কর্ম্ম করিয়া থাকেন। জয়চন্দ্র রাজা পৃথুরাজার না আসাতে ক্রুদ্ধ হইয়াছিলেন অতএব তাঁহার প্রতিমাকে অনুপযুক্ত কর্ম্মে স্থাপন করিলেন। ইহা পৃথুরাজা শুনিতে পাইয়া সসৈন্যে কান্যকুব্জ দেশে আসিয়া জয়চন্দ্র রাজার অনেক সৈন্য নষ্ট করিয়া ঐ স্বর্ণ প্রতিমা লইয়া গেলেন। তদনন্তর রাজা জয়চন্দ্র কোনহ প্রকারে যজ্ঞ সমাপন করিয়া অত্যন্ত অপমানিত হইয়া রহিলেন। এই প্রকারে পৃথুরাজাকে বড় বলবান ও রূপবান দেখিয়া রাজকন্যা যে যে রাজারা আসিয়াছিল তাহারদের মধ্যে কাহাকেও স্বয়ম্বরণ না করিয়া কহিলেন যে আমি পৃথুরাজা ব্যতিরেকে অন্য রাজাকে বরণ করিব না। জয়চন্দ্র রাজা আপন কন্যার এই নিশ্চয় জানিয়া কন্যার উপর অত্যন্ত ক্রুদ্ধ হইয়া কন্যাকে আপন বাটী হইতে দূর করিয়া দিলেন ও কহিলেন তোর যাহা ইচ্ছা তাহাই কর গিয়া। রাজ কন্যা অন্য কোনহ অন্তরঙ্গ লোকের বাটীতে আসিয়া রহিলেন। এ সকল বিষয় পৃথুরাজা শুনিতে পাইয়া চন্দ্র নামে এক ভাটকে জয়চন্দ্র রাজার নিকটে পাঠাইয়া দিলেন। ও এক পত্র লিখিলেন তাহার পাঠ এই হে মহারাজ জয়চন্দ্র তোমার কন্যা আমাকে বিবাহ করিতে মনস্থ করিয়াছেন তাঁহার যে এ মনস্থ সে উপযুক্ত বটে কিন্তু তুমি যে ইহাতে তাঁহার প্রতি ক্রুদ্ধ হইয়াছ সে অত্যন্ত অনুচিত করিয়াছ তোমার কন্যার মনস্থ অন্যথা কখনও হইবে না ইহা নিশ্চয় জানিবা। এইরূপ পত্র দিয়া চন্দ্রভাটকে পাঠাইয়া আপনিও সসৈন্যে কান্যকুব্জ দেশে প্রস্থান করিলেন চন্দ্রভাট জয়চন্দ্র রাজার কাছে গিয়া সে পত্র দিলেন। কিন্তু জয়চন্দ্র রাজা সে পত্রার্থ অবগত হইয়া কিছু উত্তর দিলেন না। পৃথুরাজা চন্দ্রভাটের প্রমুখাৎ

ইহা জ্ঞাতা হইয়া আপন যোগ্যতাতে রাজকন্যাকে লইয়া দিল্লীতে প্রস্থান করিলেন। পৃথুরাজার সৈন্য সকল কনোজেতে থাকিল পশ্চাৎ জয়চন্দ্র রাজা ইহা শুনিতে পাইয়া সসৈন্যে আসিয়া পৃথুরাজার সৈন্যের সহিত বড় যুদ্ধ করিলেন। এ যুদ্ধে দুই দিগেতে ৭০০০ সাত হাজার লোক নষ্ট হইল। জয়চন্দ্র রাজা আপনার অনেক লোক নষ্ট হওয়াতে যুদ্ধ হইতে বিরত হইয়া প্রস্থান করিলেন। পৃথুরাজার অবশিষ্ট সৈন্য দিল্লীতে আসিয়া পৌঁছিল। এইরূপে পৃথুরাজার ও জয়চন্দ্র রাজার বড় শত্রুতা হইল।

Prabodh-chandrikā, 1813

Prabodh-chandrikā[1] or Moon-light of Intelligence, his next great original work, is indeed a most interesting publication of this period from the standpoint of form and language, if not for its matter. It is an elaborate treatise

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[1] This work, though composed in 1813, was not published till 1833, when it appeared from the Serampore Press with a Preface by J. C. Marshman (dated 15th May, 1833). The title-page says :— "প্রবোধচন্দ্রিকা। শ্রীমৃত্যুঞ্জয় বিদ্যালঙ্কার কর্ত্তৃক ফোর্ট উইলিয়ম কালেজের ছাত্রেরদের নিমিত্ত রচিত। শ্রীরামপুর মুদ্রাযন্ত্রালয়ে মুদ্রাঙ্কিত হইল। ১৮৩৩। pp. 1--195. *The Prabodh Chandrika* compiled by the late Mrityunjoy Vidyalunkar, many years Chief Pundit in the College of Fort William. From the Serampore Press. 1833", pp. i-xi and 1--195. The fount is very neat and clear. There was a second edition at Serampore in 1845 as the *Catalogue of Bengali Printed Books in the Library of the British Museum* p. 67 shows. Another edition in the Sāhitya Parisat Library dated 1862, Serampore. Also another edition 1862, with the following title-page in English and Bengali: "The Prabodh Chandrika compiled by the Late Mrityunjoy Bidyalankar for many years Chief Pundit in the College of Fort William, Calcutta. Printed for the Calcutta University at the Baptist Mission Press, 1862. প্রবোধচন্দ্রিকা। শ্রীযুত মৃত্যুঞ্জয় বিদ্যালঙ্কার কর্তৃক বিরচিতা। কলিকাতা ইউনিবর্সিটীর অনুমত্যানুসারে ব্যাপটিষ্ট মিসন যন্ত্রালয়ে মুদ্রাঙ্কিতা হইল। শকাব্দা ১৭৮৪।" "All these editions may be seen to the Sāhitya Parisat Library. Entered as "Prabodh Chundrika by Mrityunjoy Vidyalunkar, 8vo, Serampore, 1833" in the *Catalogue of the Library of the Hon. East India Company*, 1845, p. 195.

of some length divided into four parts called স্তবক, each of which again is subdivided into chapters called কুসুম. The book begins with the praise of language, which, however, as quoted below, will not be found very entertaining for its stiff and pedantic style, but will somewhat exemplify and explain the Pundit's preference for Sanscrit :—

Object and scope of the work as put forth in an introductory passage.

অকারাদি ক্ষকারান্তাক্ষরমালা যদ্যপি পঞ্চাশৎ সংখ্যকা কিম্বা এক-পঞ্চাশৎ কিম্বা সপ্তপঞ্চাশৎ সংখ্যা পরিমিতা হউক তথাপি এতাবন্মাত্র কতিপয় বর্ণাবলীবিন্যাসবিশেষবশতঃ বৈদিক লৌকিক সংস্কৃত প্রাকৃত পৈশাচাদি অষ্টাদশ ভাষা ও নানাদেশীয় মনুষ্য জাতীয় ভাষা-বিশেষবশতঃ অনেক প্রকার ভাষাবৈচিত্র্য শাস্ত্রতো লোকতঃ প্রসিদ্ধ আছে। যেমন কুঞ্জর ধ্বনি তুল্যধ্বনি নিষাদ স্বর। গোরবান্নকারি ঋষভ স্বর। অজাশব্দ সদৃশ গান্ধার স্বর। ময়ূররবাকার ষড়জ স্বর। ক্রৌঞ্চস্বনোপম মধ্যম স্বর। অশ্বস্বনসঙ্কাশ ধৈবত স্বর। কুসুমসময়-কালীন কোকিলকাকলীতুলিত পঞ্চম স্বর রূপ সপ্তমাত্র সংখ্যক স্বর সংস্থানবিশেষবশতঃ অসংখ্যাত গানবৈচিত্র্য শাস্ত্রতো লোকতঃ প্রসিদ্ধ আছে। এতদ্রূপ প্রসিদ্ধ সর্ব্বভাষা চতুষ্কৃতরূপা হন।

অনভিব্যক্তবর্ণা ধ্বনিমাত্ররূপা পরানাম্নী ভাষা প্রথমা যেমন অভিনব কুমারেরদের ভাষা। তদনন্তর অভিব্যক্ত বর্ণমাত্রা পশ্যন্তীনামক ভাষা দ্বিতীয়া যেমন প্রাপ্তবংকিঞ্চিদ্বয়স্ক বালকবাণী। তৎপর পদমাত্রাত্মক মধ্যমা-ভিধা তৃতীয়া ভাষা যেমন পূর্ব্বোক্তবালকাধিক কিঞ্চিদ্বয়স্ক শিশু ভাষা। তাবপর বাক্যরূপ বৈখরী নামধেয়া সকলশাস্ত্রস্বরূপা বিবিধজ্ঞানপ্রকাশিকা সর্ব্বব্যবহার প্রদর্শিকা চতুর্থী ভাষা যেমন লৌকিক শাস্ত্রীয় ভাষা। ঈদৃশরূপে জাতমাত্র বালকের উত্তরোত্তর বয়োবৃদ্ধিক্রমে ক্রমশঃ প্রবর্ত্তমানা চতুষ্কৃতরূপা ভাষা অস্মদাদিতে যুগপৎপ্রবর্ত্তমানত্বরূপে যদ্যপি প্রতীয়মানা হউন তথাপি পূর্ব্বোক্ত পরা পশ্যন্তী মধ্যমা বৈখরীরূপ চতুষ্কৃতরূপেতেই প্রবর্ত্তমানা হউন।

ইহার প্রমাণ এই। দূরবর্ত্তি হট্টগামি লোকেরদের শ্রবণবিষয়ীভূত হট্টাগতধ্বনিমাত্রাত্মক কেবল কোলাহল হয়। অনন্তর কতিপয় পথ-গমনোত্তর সমনস্ক শ্রবণেন্দ্রিয় সন্নিকর্ষবশতঃ খণ্ডশঃ বর্ণ মাত্র গ্রহণ হয়। তদুত্তর বসন ভূষণ কদলীমূলক ইত্যাদি পদমাত্র শ্রবণ হয়। তদনন্তর হট্টনিকট প্রাপ্ত্যত্তর ক্রয়বিক্রয়কারি পুরুষেরদের বাক্যশ্রুতি হয়। অতএব অস্মদাদিভাষা চতুর্ব্বৃহরূপে প্রবর্ত্তমানভাষাত্বহেতুক পূর্ব্বোক্ত-ক্রম হট্টস্থ পুরুষভাষার ন্যায় ইত্যনুমানে সকল মানুষ ভাষার চতুর্ব্বৃহ-রূপত্ব নিশ্চয় হয়। তবে যে অস্মদাদির ভাষার যুগপৎ বৈখরীরূপতামাত্র প্রতীতি সে উচ্চারণ ক্রিয়ার অতিশীঘ্রতাপ্রযুক্ত উপর্য্যধোভাবাবস্থিত কোমলতর বহুল কমলদল সূচীবেধন ক্রিয়ার মত। এতদ্রূপে প্রবর্ত্তমান সকল ভাষাহইতে সংস্কৃত ভাষা উত্তমা বহুবর্ণময়ত্বপ্রযুক্ত একদ্ব্যক্ষর পশুপক্ষিভাষাহইতে বহুতরাক্ষর মনুষ্য ভাষার মত ইত্যনুমানে সংস্কৃত ভাষা সর্ব্বোত্তমা এই নিশ্চয়। অন্যান্য দেশীয় ভাষাহইতে গৌড়দেশীয় ভাষা উত্তমা সর্ব্বোত্তমা সংস্কৃত ভাষা বাহুল্যহেতুক। যেমন দুই এক পণ্ডিতাধিষ্ঠিত দেশহইতে বহুতর পণ্ডিতাধিষ্ঠিত দেশ উত্তম ইত্যনুমানে সকল লৌকিক ভাষার মধ্যে উত্তম গৌড়ীয় ভাষাতে অভিনব যুবক সাহেবজাতের শিক্ষার্থে কোন পণ্ডিত প্রবোধচন্দ্রিকা নামে গ্রন্থ রচিতেছেন। ইতি প্রবোধচন্দ্রিকায়াং মুখবন্ধে ভাষা প্রসংশা নাম প্রথমকুসুমং।[1]

Then King Baijpāl, son of Bikramāditya, summons his young and frolicsome child Śrīdharādhara before him and, in order to infuse in the son a love of learning, begins a discussion on the subject. Afterwards he entrusts the instruction of his son to Āchārya Prabhākar, who to educate his young pupil begins by lecturing to him in a stiff and laboured language upon every conceivable subject beginning with the philosophy

The framework of the treatise.

[1] প্রবোধচন্দ্রিকা pp. 1-2.

of the alphabet, rules of grammar, rhetoric, law, logic, astronomy, and politics, and various other branches of useful knowledge and finishing the whole by salutary instructions illustrated by popular tales. The book is indeed a monument of learning and written also in a learned language.

Want of system and arrangement.

But the book, inspite of its learning, has no system and the writer is almost wholly devoid of all artistic instincts of proportion or arrangement. The serious is mingled up with the comic, abstruse metaphysical speculation is put side by side with the low talk of peasants, mechanics and quarrelsome women, and often there is a sudden and ludicrous descent from the most pedantic and laboured language to the extreme vulgarity of the popular dialect. It is indeed a hotch-potch—a curious collection of tales and serious essays, bound together by a very slender thread.

Its language.

Nor is the language of the book all that could be desired. In the preface to the work Marshman remarks very significantly that "any person who can comprehend the present work and enter into the spirit of its beauties, may justly consider himself master of the language." But to comprehend the present work would mean some familiarity with Sanscrit, without which the book would not be easily intelligible, and there can be no doubt that this grounding in Sanscrit would certainly help much in acquiring a command over the more literary aspects of the language. But the tendency to sanscritising has been carried to the extreme.

Its importance and position in the historic development of prose style.

Indeed *Prabodh-chandrikā* exemplifies one important aspect of the development of prose style in this period and brings into clear relief the long-continued struggle between the plain and the ornate style

out of which is evolved modern prose—the plain style favoured by the European writers and their imitators, while the ornate style advocated by learned pundits of the orthodox school like Mṛtyuñjay.

Purity of diction.

The language is correct and absolutely free from the taint of Persian, and Marshman's eulogy that the book is "written in the purest Bengalee" is perfectly justifiable; but when that learned missionary and scholar speaks of its Bengali as "one of the most beautiful specimens" of prose style, it is obvious that he stretches his point too far. The harsh unrhythmical obscure Sanscrit-ridden style is far from the best that this period has to show in Bengali prose. The genius of Sanscrit is not the same as that of Bengali: and it would be a mistake to suppose that Sanscrit syntax should rule syntax in Bengali. Preponderance of Sanscrit words indeed gives strength and variety to the prose as well as purity and correctness to the diction, but the sesquipedalian affectation of laboured style becomes wearisome in a short time. The use of long-drawn-out compound words, occurrence of unusual phrases, and extensive borrowing from Sanscrit make it difficult sometimes for the uninitiated to comprehend the sentences at the first glance. In the technical or philosophical portions again the style sometimes assumes a peculiar stiffness and learned tone.[1] In some places, the sentences are so very lengthy and irregular in structure and arrangement that it becomes almost impossible to find out their meaning easily; while in other places, the writer, anxious to exhibit a variety of style, has

The style laboured and pedantic for its close imitation of Sanscrit.

Its defects.

[1] See for instance প্রথম স্তবক, তৃতীয় ও চতুর্থ কুসুম। দ্বিতীয় স্তবক, প্রথম কুসুম।

indulged in the use of language current only among the lower orders "the vulgarity of which, however," says Marshman, "he has abundantly redeemed by his vein of original humour." In this work the student may range at will over all kinds of Bengali prose of this period from the highest to the lowest, although the Sanscritised style preponderates: from sentences so studded with Sanscrit combinations as to be almost unintelligible to those who have not learnt the classical language down to vulgar abuse and colloquial freedom. We had already seen a specimen of its more difficult style; the following extract will be a good illustration ofthe author's use of the colloquial language[1] :—

Use of the current language and humour.

বাটীর নিকটে গিয়া [বিশ্ব বঞ্চক] আপন স্ত্রীকে ডাকিল ও ঠকের মা ওরে দৌড়িয়া শীঘ্র আয় মাথা হইতে ভার নামা আজি এক ব্যাটাকে বড় ঠকাইয়াছি। তাহার স্ত্রী গতিক্রিয়া কহিল ওগো আমি যাইতে পারিবো না আমার হাত যোড়া আছে। তৎপতি বিশ্ববঞ্চক আলয়ে আসিয়া স্ত্রীকে কহিল আয় এই নে আজি বড় মজা হইয়াছে দীব্য সার গুড় এক কুপা পাওয়া গিয়াছে এক বেটা লক্ষীছাড়া আপন এই গুড় ফেলাইয়া আমার সেই ঘিএর ঘড়া জানিস্‌তো তাহা নিয়া অমনি প্রস্থান করিয়াছে মনে মনে বড় হর্ষ হইয়াছে যে আজি যথেষ্ট ঘৃত পাইলাম পশ্চাৎ টের পাইবে যা শীঘ্র রাঁধাবাড়া কর আমি নাইয়াই আসিয়াছি ক্ষুধাতে পেট জ্বলিতেছে। স্ত্রী কহিল গুড় হইলেই কি রাঁধা হয় তেল নাই লুন নাই চাউল নাই তবকাবিপাতি কিছুই নাই কাঠগুলা সকলি ভিজা বেসাতি বা কিরূপে হবে তাতে আবাব বোঁছুঁড়ি অশুদ্ধা হইয়াছে কুটনা বা কে কুটিবে বাটনা বা কে বাটিবে। তৎপতি কহিল আজি কি ঘরে কিছুই নাই দেখদেখি খুদকুঁড়া যদি কিছু থাকে তবে তার পিঠা কর এই গুড় দিয়া খাইব। ইহাতে তাহার স্ত্রী কহিল বটে পিঠা করা বুঝি বড় সোজা

[1] প্রবোধচন্দ্রিকা, pp 65-66

জান না পিঠা আঠা যেমন আঠা লাগিলে শীঘ্র ছাড়ে না তেমনি পিঠার লেঠা বড় লেঠা শীঘ্র ছাড়ে না কখনোতো রাঁধিয়া খাও নাই আর লোকেরদের মাউগের মতন মাউগ পাইয়া থাকিতে তবে জানিতে।

ইহা শুনিয়া বিশ্ববঞ্চক কহিল তবে কি আজি খাওয়া হবে না ক্ষুধায় কি মরিব। তৎপত্নী কহিল মরুকম্যানে আজি কি পিঠা না খাইলিই নয় দেখিদেকি হাড়ীকুঁড়ী খুদকুঁড়া যদি কিছু থাকে। ইহা কহিয়া ঘর হইতে খুদকুঁড়া আনিয়া বাটিতে বসিয়া কহিল শীলটা ভাল বটে লোড়াটা যা ইচ্ছা তা এতে কি চিকণ বাটনা হয় মরুক যেমন হউক বাটিত। ইহা কহিয়া খুদকুঁড়া বাটিয়া কহিল বাটাতো একপ্রকার হইল আলুনি পিঠা খাইবা না লুন তেল আনিতে হইবে। গতিক্রিয়ার এই কথা শুনিয়া বিশ্ববঞ্চক কহিল ওরে বাছা ঠক তৈল লবণ কোথা হইতে গোছেগাছে কিছু আন। ইহা শুনিয়া ঠকনামে তৎপুত্র কোন পড়সীর এক ছালিয়াকে আয় আমার সঙ্গে তোকে মোয়া দিব এইরূপে ভুলাইয়া সঙ্গে লইয়া বাজারে গিয়া এক মুদির দোকানে ঐ বালককে বন্ধক রাখিয়া তৈল লবণ লইয়া ঘরে আইল। তৎপিতা জিজ্ঞাসিল কিরূপে তৈল লবণ আনিলি ঠক কহিল এক ছোঁড়াকে ভুলাইয়া বন্ধক দিয়া মুদিশালাকে ঠকিয়া আনিলাম ইহা শুনিয়া তৎপিতা কহিল হাঁ মোর বাছা এই তো বটে না হবে কেন আমার পুত্র ভাল অন্ন করিয়া খাইতে পারিবে। এইরূপে পুত্রের ধন্যবাদ করিয়া ভার্য্যাকে কহিল ওলো মাগি যা যা শীঘ্র পিঠা করিগা ক্ষুধাতে বাঁচি না।

It will be seen, however, that his narrative and descriptive manner as well as his power of weaving dialogues into his story is really praiseworthy for his time. But it must not be supposed that between these extremes of colloquialism on the one hand and academic pedantry on the other, Mṛtyuñjay never succeeded in steering a middle course. On the contrary, from the following extract it will be seen that his narrative

His general narrative manner: ease and dignity.

style though sanscritised often assumes an ease and dignity reminding one of the later style of Bidyāsāgar[1]:—

Illustration

দণ্ডকারণ্যে প্রাচীনদীতীরে বহুকালাবধি এক তপস্বী তপস্যা করেন বিবিধ কৃচ্ছ্রসাধ্য তপঃ করিয়াও তপঃসিদ্ধিভাগী হন না। দৈবাৎ ঐ তপোধনের তপোবনেতে এক দিবস নারদমুনি আসিয়া উপস্থিত হইলেন। ঐ তপস্বী বহুমান পুরঃসর পাদ্যার্ঘ্যাসন দান ও স্বাগত প্রশ্ন করিয়া নারদমুনিকে নিবেদন করিলেন। হে ঈশ্বরদর্শি মুনি বহুকালব্যতীত হইল আমি তপস্যা করিতেছি তপঃসিদ্ধি হয় না কতকালে আমার তপঃসিদ্ধি হইবে ইহা আপনি ঈশ্বরসমীপে জানিয়া আমাকে আজ্ঞা করিবেন। তাপসের এই বাক্য শুনিয়া নারদমুনি ঈশ্বরসন্নিধানে গিয়া তাহার কথা নিবেদন করিলেন। ঈশ্বর আজ্ঞা করিলেন ঐ তাপসের তপোবনোপকণ্ঠে যে অতিবৃহৎ তিন্তিড়ী বৃক্ষ আছে সে বৃক্ষের যত পত্র তত শত বৎসরে তার তপস্যাসিদ্ধি হইবে। ঈশ্বরের এই আজ্ঞা নারদ শুনিয়া ঐ তপোধনকে কহিলেন তপোধন শুনিবামাত্র পরমাহ্লাদে উদ্ধবাহু হইয়া নৃত্য করিতে লাগিলেন ও কহিলেন ভাল কখনো হউক আমার তপঃসিদ্ধি হইবেতো তপস্বী এইরূপে অত্যন্ত সন্তোষকরণ হইয়া নারদমুনির নিকটে বসিয়া আছেন ইত্যবসরে পরমেশ্বর স্বয়ং ঐ তাপসের আশ্রমে আসিয়া তাহাকে দর্শন দিয়া কহিলেন। হে তাপস অদ্য তোমার তপঃসিদ্ধি হইল তাহার বিলম্বের কারণ যে সকল পাপ ছিল তাহা তোমার নিষ্ঠার এতাদৃশী পরাকাষ্ঠাতে সন্তুষ্ট হইয়া তোমাকে ক্ষমা করিলাম এইরূপে ঐ তপস্বিকে তপঃসিদ্ধি বর প্রদান করিয়া (করিয়া) ঈশ্বর অন্তর্হিত হইলেন। তদনন্তর নারদমুনি ঐ তপোধনকে কহিলেন হে তপস্বি কার্যসিদ্ধির কালের কিছু ইয়ত্তা নাই কিন্তু পুরুষের বিশ্বাসপূর্ব্বক আত্যন্তিক নিষ্ঠাতে সন্তুষ্ট পরমেশ্বরের প্রসাদ যখন হয় তখনি কার্যসিদ্ধি হয় দ্বৈধ যাবৎ থাকে তাবৎ পর্য্যন্ত কার্যসিদ্ধি হইতে পারে না।

[1] প্রবোধচন্দ্রিকা, pp. 56-57

Haraprasād Rāy.

The last though not the least important work of this period is *Puruṣ-parīkṣā* or the Trial of Man composed by Haraprasād Rāy and published by the Śrīrāmpur Press in 1815.[1] It is a pretty large volume and contains 52 stories[2] translated from a Sanskrit original said to have been composed by the poet Bidyāpati at the command of Rājā Śibasiṁha. Its object is not only to impart ethical instruction[3] by extolling and illustrating the virtues of men, but also to entertain by clever and amusing stories; and this is set forth at the beginning of the

Puruṣ-Parīkṣā, 1815

Its scope indicated by the author himself.

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[1] The title-page says:—শ্রীযুত বিদ্যাপতি পণ্ডিত কর্ত্তৃক সংস্কৃত বাক্যে সংগৃহীতা পুরুষ পরীক্ষা। হরপ্রসাদ রায় কর্ত্তৃক বাঙ্গালা ভাষাতে রচিতা। শ্রীরামপুরে ছাপা হইল। ১৮১৫। pp. 1-275. It is very remarkable that this book has been published by the Baṅgabāsī Press (B. S. 1301) as a work by Mṛtyuñjay Bidyālaṅkār. I am not aware of the existence of any such work by Mṛtyuñjay nor does Roebuck, Buchanan, or Long mention it. The Baṅgabāsī reprint, however, is not very accurate. Of Haraprasād Rāy's life, little seems to be known. Long (*Return of the Names and Writings, etc.*, 1855) speaks of him as "Haraprasad Ray of Kanchrapara." The copy in the British Museum Library (Blumhardt, *Catalogue*, p. 113) of the first edition bears the same title-page, date and place of publication as we have quoted above: but there is also another edition in the same Library reprinted at London in 1826. And a third revised edition, Calcutta, possibly of 1866. Also in the *Catalogue of the Library of the Hon. East India Company*, 1845, p. 195, and in the *Catalogue of the Library of the East India College*; the name of the author is not stated in these Catalogues. An edition dated Calcutta 1818 is entered in the *Catalogue of the Library of the East India College*, 1843. There are two editions (apparently of 1834 and 1853 respectively though the title-page is wanting) in the Library of the Sāhitya Pariṣat.

[2] Although there are stories in this work which would have better been expurgated.

[3] As a book of fable, this work seems to have been very popular.

work :—অভিনব প্রজ্ঞাবিশিষ্ট বালকেরদিগের নীতিশিক্ষার নিমিত্তে এবং কামকলাকৌতুকাবিষ্ট পরস্ত্রীগণের হর্ষের নিমিত্তে শ্রীশিবসিংহ রাজার আজ্ঞানুসারে বিদ্যাপতি নামে কবি এই গ্রন্থ রচনা করিতেছেন। এবং এই প্রার্থনা করিতেছেন যে রসজ্ঞানদ্বারা নির্ম্মলবুদ্ধি যে পণ্ডিত সকল তাহারা নীতি বোধানুবোধক যে এই সকল বাক্যের গুণ তন্নিমিত্তে কি আমার রচিত এই গ্রন্থ শ্রবণ করিবেন না অর্থাৎ অবশ্য শ্রবণ করিবেন। যে গ্রন্থের লক্ষণোক্ত পরীক্ষার দ্বারা পুরুষ সকলের পরিচয় হয় এবং যে গ্রন্থের কথা সকল লোকের মনোরমা হয় সেই পুরুষ পরীক্ষা নামক পুস্তক রচনা করা যাইতেছে।[1]

The framework of the story is this : Once upon a time a certain king anxious to marry his beautiful daughter consulted a certain sage on the subject. The sage advised him to marry his daughter to a *man*. Asked what the characteristics of a real man are the sage begins enumerating and illustrating the various virtues of a real man and the object of manhood. The book is comparable in many respects to Mṛtyuñjay's *Batriś Siṁhāsan* or *Pradodh-chandrikā* and although not equally learned or affected, the style shows the same tendency to sanscritisation and borders almost on the pedantic. By taste and inclination, Haraprasād seems to belong to the same orthodox school as Mṛtyuñjay. It is hardly necessary to illustrate his style at a great length, and the following short quotation picked out from the more easy portions will be found sufficient to enable the reader to form his own judgment :—

The framework of the collection.

Its language and style.

Dr. Yates gives 16 stories from it the second volume of his *Introduction*, and Haughton gives 4

[1] পুরুষপরীক্ষা, pp. 3-4

অথ অলসকথা।[1]

সকল কার্য্যের উদ্যোগের যে হেতু সেই উৎসাহ তাহাকে জীবের ধর্ম্মবিশেষ কহা যায় সেই উৎসাহহীন যে মনুষ্য সে অলস হয় তাহার উদাহরণ এই।

মিথিলা নগরীতে বীরেশ্বর নামে এক রাজমন্ত্রী থাকেন তিনি দানশীল এবং অত্যন্ত দয়ালু সকল দুর্গত ও অনাথ লোকেরদিগেরে প্রতিদিন তাহারদের ইচ্ছামত আহার দান করেন কিন্তু ঐ সকলের মধ্যে অলস লোকেরদিগেরে অন্ন এবং বস্ত্র দান করেন। যে হেতুক অলস লোক জঠরাগ্নিতে ব্যাকুল হইয়াও আলস্যপ্রযুক্ত কোন কর্ম্ম করিতে পারে না অতএব অলস লোক সকল দুর্গতের মধ্যে প্রধান গণিত হইয়াছে অথবা আলস্য পরমসুখস্থান তদাশ্রিতরূপে খ্যাত যেহেতুক আলস্যমাত্রাবলম্বি পুরুষের অক্ষুব্ধ মন কোন বিষয়াকাঙ্ক্ষা করে না এবং সে স্বয়ং কোন অভিলষিত কর্ম্মে শ্রমযুক্ত হয় না কেবল জঠরাগ্নি তাহার নিদ্রাজন্য সুখ নষ্ট করে আমি এই বিবেচনা করি। পরে অনেক লোভী লোক অলসেরদের অভীষ্ট লাভ শুনিয়া সেখানে গিয়া অলসেরদিগের সহিত থাকিল যে হেতুক স্বজাতীয়ের সহবাস সকলের সুখকর হয় এবং স্বজাতীয়ের সুখ দেখিয়া কোন জীব সেখানে না যায়। পরে ধূর্ত্তেরা অলসেরদের সুখ দেখিয়া কৃত্রিম আলস্য প্রকাশ করিয়া সেখানে ভোজনদ্রব্য গ্রহণ করিতে লাগিল। পশ্চাৎ নিয়োগি পুরুষেরা অলসশালাতে অনেক দ্রব্য ব্যয় জানিয়া এই পরামর্শ করিল যে স্বামী অলসেরদিগকে অক্ষম জানিয়া খাদ্যদ্রব্য দেন কিন্তু অলস ভিন্ন অন্য অন্য লোকও কপট করিয়া দ্রব্যগ্রহণ করিতেছে সে আমারদের বুদ্ধিভ্রমপ্রযুক্ত অতএব কেবল আমারদিগের দোষেতেই প্রভুর ধন নষ্ট হইতেছে ইহাতে আমরা প্রত্যবায়ী হইব। অতএব সকল অলসেরদের পরীক্ষা করি এই পরামর্শ করিয়া অলসেরা যে গৃহে শয়ন করিয়াছিল সেই গৃহে অগ্নি দিয়া নিকটে থাকিল তখন সেই গৃহে শয়িত ধূর্ত্ত সকল গৃহেতে অতিশয় প্রজ্বলিতাগ্নি দেখিয়া

Illustrative extract from the story of the indolent men.

[1] পুরুষপরীক্ষা, pp. 55-58.

দূরে পলায়ন করিল। অন্যালস পুরুষেরাও পলায়ন করিল। প্রকৃত অলস চারিজন সেখানে শয়ন করিয়া পরস্পর কথোপকথন করিতে লাগিল এবং তাহারদের মধ্যে একজন বস্ত্রেতে আপন মুখ ঢাকিয়া কহিতেছে ওহে ভাই কি নিমিত্তে এই কোলাহল হইতেছে। দ্বিতীয় ব্যক্তি কহিল আমি অনুভব করি যে এই গৃহে অগ্নি লাগিয়া থাকিবে। তখন তৃতীয় অলস কহিতেছে এখানে এমত ধার্ম্মিক লোক কেহ নাই যে আর্দ্র বস্ত্র কিম্বা আর্দ্র শয্যাকরণক আমারদের শরীর আবৃত করে। চতুর্থ অলস ইহা শুনিয়া কহিল ওহে বাচাল সকল তোমরা কত কথা কহিতে পার কি মৌনী হইয়া থাকিতেই পার না। পশ্চাৎ নিয়োগিপুরুষেরা এই চারি অলসলোকের পরস্পরালাপ শুনিয়া তাহারদিগের উপরে অগ্নিপতনের ভয়েতে সেই চারি অলস লোকেরদের কেশাকর্ষণ করিয়া শীঘ্র গৃহের বাহিরে আনিলেন। অনন্তর নিয়োগিপুরুষেরা এক শ্লোক পাঠ করিলেন তাহার অর্থ এই যেমত স্ত্রীলোকের স্বামী গতি এবং বালকেরদিগের জননী গতি সেইরূপ অলস লোকেরদিগের দয়ালু পুরুষই গতি তদ্ব্যতিরেকে অন্য গতি নাই। পরে সেই নিয়োগি পুরুষেরা অলসেরদিগকে পূর্ব্ব হইতে অধিক সামগ্রী দান করিতে লাগিলেন। ইতি অলসকথা সমাপ্তা।

CHAPTER VII

Earliest Bengali Journalism

It will be seen that almost all the publications of the College of Fort William were printed and issued at the Śrīrāmpur Press.[1] But a greater work than this was accomplished by it and its missionary founders when in 1818 Dr. Marshman, in conjunction with Dr. Carey, proposed and carried out a scheme of publishing a monthly journal and a newspaper in Bengali. Such a project had long been present in the minds of the Śrīrāmpur brethren, for the Press as a means of diffusing knowledge is always an important and useful auxiliary to an earnest missionary: but stringent restrictions on the Press, especially the vernacular press, had made it difficult for them to carry out their noble purpose.

Periodicals and Newspapers published by Śrīrāmpur Press, 1818.

When therefore in February 1818, Dr. Marshman proposed the publication of *Digdarśan*, Carey in his anxiety for the safety of the mission, consented only on condition that it should be a monthly, and should avoid political discussion.[2] The first Bengali periodical therefore confined itself purely to instructive

Digdarśan (April 1818) or *The Indian Youth's Magazine.*

[1] When on March 21, 1800, an advertisement appeared in the official *Calcutta Gazette*, announcing that the missionaries had established a press at Śrīrāmpur, it at once roused Lord Wellesley who, although a liberal statesman, had fettered the press in British India. But on the assurance of Mr. Brown, the Governor-General wrote to the missionaries saying that he was personally favourable to the movement and that such an Oriental press would be invaluable to the College of Fort William.

[2] Here is an extract from the minutes of the meeting of the Mission regarding the publication of *Digdarśan* :—

"Feb. 13th, 1818. Mr. Marshman having proposed the publication of a periodical work in Bengali to be sold amongst the natives for the

literary, scientific, or historical essays of general interest. Each article was written both in Bengali and English, put opposite to each other, the English version on one page on the left and the Bengali on the next page on the right.[1] The *Digdarśan* or *Magazine for Indian Youth*, as its title-page says in the alternative (দিগ্‌দর্শন অর্থাৎ যুব-লোকের কারণ সংগৃহীত নানা উপদেশ) was published in April 1818[2] and was thus the first paper of its kind in Bengali. An enumeration of the contents of the first number would indicate the nature as well as the variety of the topics dealt with. It was essentially meant for the diffusion of useful knowledge on various subjects and none of the articles had any great pretensions for original writing, artistic presentation or literary finish. The first number contained the following articles :—আমেরিকার দর্শন বিষয়ে (Of the Discovery of America), হিন্দুস্থানের সীমার বিবরণ

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purpose of exciting a spirit of enquiry among them, it was resolved that there was no objection to the publication of such a journal, provided all political intelligence, more especially regarding the East, be excluded from it and it do not appear in a form likely to alarm government. It must therefore be confined to articles of general information and notice of new discoveries, but a small place may be allotted to local events, with the view of rendering it attractive." (*History of Serampore Mission*, vol. ii. p. 162.)

[1] From the Tenth *Memoir* relative to Serampore Translations (July, 1832 : Appendix) it appears that two editions were issued, *viz.*, (1) bilingual, English and Bengali ; (2) in Bengali only. In the volumes we have been able to trace, Nos. i-xvi (from April 1818 to March 1819 and from January to April 1820) are bilingual ; while Nos. xv to xxvi (from March 1820 to February 1821), it is published only in Bengali. We have another edition Nos i-xii (April 1818 to March 1819) published only in Bengali. So it seems that the two editions were issued simultaneously from the very beginning of its publication.

[2] The date given by Dinesh Chandra Sen (*History*, p. 877) as February 1818 is incorrect. See quotation from Marshman's letter at p. 233 poste (footnote). The first number with the date April 1818, may be seen in the Sahitya Parisat Library.

(Of the Limits of Hindoosthan), হিন্দুস্থানের বাণিজ্য (Of the Trade of Hindoosthan), বলুন দ্বারা সাদলর সাহেবের আকাশ গমন (Mr. Sadler's Journey in a Balloon from Dublin to Holyhead) বিসুবিয়স পর্ব্বত বিষয়ে (Of Mount Vesuvius). It will be seen that it was eminently fit to be a "Youth's Magazine," and the nature of the themes as well as the manner of expression was varied and novel enough to make it attractive. There were interesting scientific papers on the compass, the metals, the steamboat, botany of India, etc., historical accounts of ancient and modern nations, sketches, narratives of travel, notices of England and other countries, and a few essays on the commerce and productions of India, all treated in a popular and easy way. The following selection will serve for a specimen :—

বঙ্গভূমির মহাদুর্ভিক্ষ.

বঙ্গভূমির প্রধান উৎপন্ন বস্তু ধান্য, তাহার অনেক অন্য অন্য দেশে প্রেরিত করা যায়, দৈবাৎ কখন কখন ফসল না জন্মিলে দুর্ভিক্ষ হয়. এইরূপ দূর্ভিক্ষ বঙ্গভূমিতে ও হিন্দুস্থানের অন্য অন্য ভাগে কখন কখন হইয়াছিল. সন ১৭৭০ সালে বাঙ্গালা দেশে এইরূপ অতি ঘোর দুর্ভিক্ষ হইয়াছিল, তৎকালে নবাব ও অন্যান্য ভাগ্যবান্ লোকেরা দরিদ্র লোকেরদের মধ্যে অনেক তণ্ডুল দান করিয়াছিলেন, কিন্তু শেষে তাঁহারদের ভাণ্ডার শূন্য হওয়াতে দান নিবৃত্ত হইল. ইহাতে অনেক দুঃখি লোক জীবনোপায় প্রত্যাশাতে তৎকালীন ইংগ্রণ্ডীয়েরদের প্রধান বসতি স্থান কলিকাতায় আইল. কিন্তু তখন কোম্পানীর ভাণ্ডারে দ্রব্যাভাব প্রযুক্ত তাহারদের কোন উপায় হইল না. ইহাতে সেই দুর্ভিক্ষারম্ভের দুই সপ্তাহ পরে সহস্র সহস্র লোক রাজপথে ও মাঠে স্থানে স্থানে পড়িয়া মরিল. এবং কুক্কুর ও শকুনিদ্বারা ঐ সকল মৃতশরীর ছিন্নভিন্ন হওয়াতে বায়ু অনিষ্টকারী হইল, তাহাতে সকলের ভয় জন্মিল এই দুর্ভিক্ষের পশ্চাৎ মহামারী আসিতেছে. কোম্পানীর প্রেরিত এক শত লোক নিযুক্ত ছিল, তাহারা ডুলি ও ঝোড়াদ্বারা ঐ সকল মৃত শরীর

নদীতে ফেলিত, তৎপ্রযুক্ত নদীর জল এমত শবেতে পূরিল যে তাহার মৎস অখাদ্য হইল, এবং অনেক মৎসভোজী তৎক্ষণাৎ মরিল.

তৎসময়ে আগষ্ট মাসে অতিদূর আকাশে একটা ভয়ানক দুর্লক্ষণদর্শন হইল; তাহার বর্ণ কৃষ্ণমেঘের ন্যায়, সে কখন কখন সূর্য্যকে আচ্ছাদিত করিল, এবং কলিকাতার উপরি ভাগে অনেক দূরপর্য্যন্ত ব্যাপ্ত হইল; যে দিন অতিশয় গ্রীষ্ম সেই দিন ঐ মেঘ নীচে দৃষ্ট হইল, তাহাতে তিন দিন পর্য্যন্ত লোকেরদের অনেক ভাবনা জন্মিল. তৃতীয় দিবসে মেঘারম্ভ ও অতিশয় গ্রীষ্ম হইলে ঐ কৃষ্ণ মেঘ এত নীচে আইল যে সকলে সুন্দররূপ দর্শন করিতে পাইল, তখন বিশেষরূপে জানা গেল যে দংশকীটের মত বড় পতঙ্গ রক্তবর্ণ শরীর ও মস্তক ও চক্ষু বড় ও মধুমক্ষিকার মত শ্রেণীবদ্ধ উড়িবার সময়ে অতিঋজু রেখার ন্যায়; কিন্তু তাহাহইতে লোকেরদের এমত ভয় হইল যে কেহ তাহার একটাকেও ধরিল না. সাঁইত্রিশ পলপর্য্যন্ত বৃষ্টি সমকালীন সকলে একস্থানে নিশ্চিন্ত রূপে রহিল. পরে চারিহস্ত উদ্ধে উঠিল এবং কিঞ্চিৎকাল পরে তত নামিল, পরে বায়ু কোণহইতে একটা বায়ু উঠিয়া দুই দিন পর্য্যন্ত থাকিল. ঐ বায়ুসত্বে পূর্ব্বমত উঠিল ও নামিল কিন্তু অধিক শীঘ্ররূপে. তাহার পরদিবস অতিপ্রত্যূষে আকাশ শূন্য দেখা গেল. এই মেঘদর্শন হওনের পূর্ব্ব কতকদিন ভেক ও কীটাদি রাত্রিকালে বৃষ্টিপতন সময়ে অবিরত শব্দ করিয়াছিল, তাহারা এককালে এমন অদৃশ্য হইল যে নদী ভিন্ন আর কোনখানে তাহারা দেখা গেল না ও শুনা গেল না.

এই দুর্ভিক্ষ জলাভাবপ্রযুক্ত হইয়াছিল. বঙ্গভূমিতে দুই ফসল জন্মে, এক ফসল ক্ষুদ্র শস্য ও অন্য মহাফসল ধান্যাদি. কিন্তু ১৭৬৯ সালে জলাভাবপ্রযুক্ত মহাফসল ধান্যাদি জন্মিল না, এবং সন ১৭৭০ সালেও ক্ষুদ্র ফসল জন্মিল না ইহাতেই পূর্ব্বলিখিত দুর্দশা উপস্থিত হইয়াছিল.

এই দুর্ভিক্ষ অদ্যাপি বঙ্গভূমিস্থ লোকেরদের মন হইতে লুপ্ত হয় নাই. এবং অনেক বৃদ্ধলোকেরা আপনারদের যৌবনকালীন ক্রিয়ার সময় সেই দুর্ভিক্ষ বৎসর দ্বারা গণনা করেন.[1]

[1] *Digdarsan*, April 1820. pp 167-173; the English translation is omitted

This useful paper, however, lasted only for three years (1818-1821)[1]; but it became very popular and successful for a new venture, and its success emboldened the missionaries to launch upon the more perilous task of starting a newspaper in Bengali. A quarter or more of a century's intolerance on the part of the government had made the missionaries diffident; but their eagerness to open a new avenue to the thoughts of the nation made them overcome all scruples, more specially because the *Bengal Gazette* (1816-1818)[2] the only paper in Bengali hitherto published, was now dead, and its place required to be filled up. Nothing could keep back the indefatigable missionaries but they took every precaution against imperilling the safety of their mission. Consequently, before the actual publication of the paper, they issued prospectus and advertisements in the local papers about the proposed journal so that objections, if any, from official and other quarters would be taken beforehand. Then on the critical night before the publication, the first proof of the first number was laid before the assembled brotherhood at their weekly meeting on Friday evening. Dr. Carey, whom long experience had taught to be more cautious mentioned his fears about the Mission, but he

Samāchār darpaṇ or the Mirror of News. 23rd May, Saturday, 1818.

History of its publication.

[1] I have been able to trace the following numbers (in the Sāhitya Pariṣat Library); April 1818 to March 1919, nos. i-xii; January 1820 to April 1820, nos. xiii-xvi; May 1820 to February 1821, nos. xvii to xxvi. It seems only 26 numbers were published. *The Catalogue of E. I. Company's Library* (1845) (p. 267) enters *Digdarśan* only for April 1818 to February 1821.

[2] Long says (*Return of Names and Writings, etc.*) that the *Bengal Gazette* was published for a year. But unfortunately file of this paper is not available any where.

consented to its publication when Marshman promised to send a copy with an analysis of its contents in English, to Government, and to stop the enterprise if it should be officially disapproved.[1] Lord Hastings was fighting

[1] Long (*Catalogue*) calls the paper *Serampore Darpan* and in the xiiith vol. of the *Calcutta Review* (1850) in the article on Bengali Literature he calls it the *Darpan of Serampore*. Of course this might be an abbreviated way of speaking, but accurately put it must bear the name of *Samāchār Darpan*. The narrative of the publication of *Digdarsan* as well as of this paper is thus given by J. C. Marshman :

History of its publication as given in a letter of Marshman's.

"It appeared (in 1818) that the time was ripe for a native newspaper, and I offered the missionaries to undertake the publication of it. The jealousy which the Government had always manifested of the periodical press appeared, however, to present serious obstacle. The English journals in Calcutta were under the strictest surveillance and many a column appeared resplendent with the stars which were substituted at the last moment for the editorial remarks and through which the censor had drawn his fatal pen. In this state of things it was difficult to suppose that a native paper would be tolerated for a moment. It was resolved therefore to feel the official pulse by starting a monthly magazine in the first instance, and the *Digdarshan* appeared in April 1818. It was composed of historical and other notices, likely from their novelty to excite the attention of the natives and to sharpen their curiosity. In the last page, in a smaller type, some few items of political intelligence were inserted. Two numbers were published, and copies were sent to the principal members of Government (including the Censor) and the fact of the publication was widely circulated by advertisement in all the English papers of Calcutta. As no objection appeared to be taken to the publication of the magazine by the censor, though it contained news, it was resolved at once to launch the weekly paper, and call it by the name given to the earliest English news-letter, the *Mirror of News* or *Samachar Darpan*. But Dr. Carey, who had been labouring fifteen years in India during the period when the opposition to missionary efforts and enlightenment of the natives was in full vigour, was unfavourable to the publication of the Journal because he feared it would give umbrage in official circles and weaken the good understanding which had been gradually growing up between the missionaries and the government. He strenuously advised that

the Pindaris, and nothing was said by his Council. On his return, the Governor-General wrote to the Editor with his own hand, expressing his entire approval of the paper and declaring that "the effect of such a paper must be extensively and importantly useful." He even induced his Council to allow it to circulate by post at one-fourth the then heavy rate[1] thus giving a fresh impetus to the native newspaper press. It became popular

Encouragement of Government.

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the idea of it should be dropped, but he was over-ruled by his two colleagues, Dr. Marshman and Dr. Ward. When the prospectus was brought up for final examination at the weekly meeting of the missionaries the evening before the day of publication, he renewed his objection to the undertaking on the grounds he had stated. Dr. Marshman then offered to proceed to Calcutta the next morning and submit the first number of the new Gazette, together with a rough translation of the articles, to Mr. Edmonstone, then Vice-President, and to the Chief Secretary (John Adam), and he promised that it should be discontinued if they raised any objection to it. To his great delight he found both of them favourable to the undertaking. At the same time he transmitted a copy of the paper to Lord Hastings, then in the North Western Provinces, and was happy to receive a reply in his own hand highly commending the project of endeavouring to excite and gratify a spirit of enquiry in the native mind by means of a newspaper. And thus the journal was established. A copy of it was sent with a subscription-book to all the great baboos in Calcutta, and the first name entered on the list was that of Dwarkanath Tagore. On the return of Lord Hastings to the Presidency, he endeavoured to encourage the undertaking by allowing the journal to circulate through the country at one-fourth the usual charge of postage which at that time was extravagantly high" (*Extract of a Letter from J. C. Marshman to Dr. George Smith* published in the latter's *Twelve Indian Statesmen*, 1898, pp. 230-33. The same account is to be found in J. C. Marshman, *Life and Times of Carey, etc.*, vol. ii, p. 161 *seq.*). Also see *Cal. Rev.* 1907, vol. cxxiv, p. 391-93.

[1] For the postage-rates, see Seton-Karr, *op. cit.*, vol. iv. (1868), p. 51, etc. Government also encouraged the paper by subscribing to a hundred copies during 1820-1828.

at once, and as it avoided all religious controversy in the earlier issues, it was welcomed even by the most orthodox among the Hindus. The name of Dvārakānāth Ṭhākur headed the list of subscribers, and its long life of 33 years, in spite of later oppositions and vicissitudes, till 1851 sufficiently indicates its power, efficiency and popularity as the leading and for some time the only paper of the day. "To the *Darpan*," it is said, "the educated natives looked as the means of bringing the oppression of their own countrymen to the knowledge of the public and the authorities. Government too found it useful for contradicting rumours and promoting contentment, if not loyalty."[1]

Its power, efficiency and popularity.

The first number of the *Samāchār Darpaṇ* was published on Saturday, May 23, 1818 (১০ই জ্যৈষ্ঠ, সন ১২২৫)[2]

[1] Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 204.

[2] The earlier files of the paper had long become very scarce and this fact has given rise to various erroneous views about the date of its first publication. A file of this paper from its origin (May 23, 1818 to July 14, 1821) will be found in the Library of the Sāhitya Pariṣat. Even Marshman himself, in his two books (*History of Serampore Mission*, vol ii, p. 163, and *History of Bengal*, 1859, p. 251) gave the dates erroneously as May 31, Sunday, 1818, and May 29, Friday, 1818 respectively. Dinesh Chandra Sen, in following Marshman, has fallen into the same error in his *History*. Long (*Descriptive Catalogue*, 1855, p. 66) gives August 23, Friday, 1818. The most obvious mistake is that made by Rajnārāyaṇ Basu who in his discourse on Bengali Language and Literature dates the paper from 1816, and the *Calcutta Christian Observer* (Feb., 1840) is equally mistaken in taking 1819 as the date of the first publication of this paper. I have been able to get access to the following files of the paper (*a*) from May 23, 1818 to July 14, 1821 (Sāhitya Pariṣat Library) (*b*) from 1831 to 1837 (Imperial Library, Calcutta) (*c*) From 1851 to 1852 (Bengal Asiatic Society's Library). I have given an account of these files in an article in the *Sāhitya Pariṣat Patrikā*, vol. 24, pp. 149-170.

and from the seventh number it bore on its front the following motto

দর্পণে মুখসৌন্দর্য্যমিব কার্য্যবিচক্ষণাঃ।
বৃত্তান্তমিহ জানন্তু সমাচারস্য দর্পণে ॥

Its claim to be regarded as the first Bengali newspaper; that credit belongs to the *Bengal Gazette* (1816-1818) of Gaṅgādhar Bhaṭṭāchārya.

Marshman tells us that the paper was so baptised because the name (Mirror of News) was associated with the earliest English newsletter.[1] But its claim to be regarded as the earliest Bengali newspaper is not, inspite of current and popular opinion,[2] justifiable, for the first Bengali newspaper was not the *Samāchār Darpaṇ* but the *Bengal Gazette*. The latter journal, now scarce, was published for the first time in 1816 by one Gaṅgādhar[3] Bhaṭṭāchārya of whom little, however, is known. This paper lasted for two years, having been extinguished in 1818.[4] But though not the first newspaper in Bengali, *Samāchār Darpaṇ* practically laid the foundation of vernacular journalism in Bengali by directing the attention and energy of the Bengali people to a neglected literary field which now

[1] See extract from G. Smith, *Twelve English Statesmen*, quoted at p. 233 foot-note

[2] It has been so called by many an eminent writer, *e.g.*, J. C. Marshman, *History of Serampore Mission*, vol ii, p. 163, and *History of Bengal*, p. 251; Long, *Cal. Rev.*, 1850, vol. xiii, p. 145 (but not in the *Catalogue* where he has corrected the mistake); *Friend of India*, Sept. 19, 1850; Smith, *Life of Carey*, p. 204; Dinesh Ch. Sen, *History of Bengali Language and Literature* (1911), p. 877; etc.

[3] He must not however be confounded with Gaṅgākśior Bhaṭṭāchārya.

[4] Long's *Descriptive Catalogue*, also his *Return*, *etc.* already cited; But in the *Return*, *etc.*, it is said to have continued for one year only. But see *Sāhitya Pariṣat Patrikā*, vol. v, pp. 248-250; *Cal. Rev.* 1907, p. 293. We learn from Rājnārāyaṅ Basu (*Bāṅgālā Bhāṣā O Sāhitya Biṣayak Bakṛtā*, p. 59) that Gaṅgādhar was well-known as the publisher of illustrated editions of *Annadāmaṅgal*, etc.

so much engages their activity and affords so many opportunities for benefiting the country.

Although conducted chiefly by the missionaries, it was never wholly a missionary paper. Correspondence from various parts of the country—for it had a very large circulation over 360 stations in the country—useful articles on scientific, political, historical and geographical topics,[1] adorned its eagerly read pages. It recorded all the interesting contemporary incidents, political and administrative, and we have short articles on the fight with the Pindaris, on the conflict with Holkar, Sindhia and other Indian powers, on the last stage in the war between England and France (including many references to Napoleon Bonaparte), an account of the Mogul Emperor and of Raja Ranjit Sing and essays on other interesting topics. Besides these, there were descriptions, reviews and advertisements of new publications, educational news (like the proceedings of the School Book Society and the School Society and the establishment of a college at Śrīrāmpur), various social topics (like the description of Śrāddha ceremony of Gopīmohan Ṭhākur), market reports, reports on stocks and shares and on exports and imports, civil appointments, programmes of the Governor-General's tour, commercial and shipping intelligence, sensational news (burning fatalities, theft, dacoity, murder, earthquake, storm, rath-jātrā ceremony at Māheś) and references to the filthy condition of Calcutta roads and other local complaints. Although chiefly a newspaper, it published from time to

Nature of its articles.

[1] For a short list of these articles, See *Sāhitya Parishat Patrikā*, already cited, vol. v, p. 257. Also my paper in vol. xxiii of the same. For a note on Early Christian Periodicals, see Appendix IV at the end of this volume.

time various useful articles, short moral tales and humorous sketches. Religious controversy was introduced later on and through this it came into collision with Rām Mohan Rāy and his party who started the *Saṁbād Kaumudī* within a year (1819) as well as with orthodox papers like *Saṁbād Timira Nāśak*. The scope and object of *Samāchār Darpaṇ* was thus set forth at the outset :—

Its scope and object.

সমাচারদর্পণ।

কয়েক মাস হইল শ্রীরামপুরের [ছা]পাখানা হইতে এক ক্ষুদ্র পুস্তক[1] [প্রকা]শ হইয়াছিল ও সেই পুস্তক [মা]স ২ ছাপাইবার কল্পও ছিল তা[হা]র অভিপ্রায় এই যে এতদ্দেশীয় [লো]কেরদের নিকটে সকল প্রকার [বি]দ্যা প্রকাশ হয় কিন্তু সে পুস্তকে [সক]লের সম্মতি হইল না এই [কারণ] যদি সে পুস্তক মাস ২ ছাপা [হইত] তবে কাহারো উপকার [হইত] না অতএব তাহার পরী[বর্ত্তে] এই সমাচারের পত্র ছা[পা] আরম্ভ করা গিয়াছে। [ইহার] নাম সমাচার দর্পণ।—

[এই স]মাচারের পত্র প্রতি সপ্তাহে ছাপা যাইবে তাহার মধ্যে [এই এই স]মাচার দেওয়া যাইবে।

[১ এতদ্দেশে]র জজ ও কলেক্তর [ ]র ও অন্য রাজকর্ম্মাধ্য[ক্ষের-দের] নিয়োগ।—

[২ শ্রীশ্রীযু]ত বড় সাহেব যে ২ [নূতন আই]ন ও হুকুম প্রভৃতি [প্রকাশ করিবে]ন।

[৩ ইংগ্লণ্ড] ও ইউরোপের অন্য ২ [প্রদেশ হইতে] যে যে নূতন সমাচার [আইসে এবং] এই দেশের নানা [সমাচার]।

[৪ বাণিজ্যাদি]র নূতন বিবরণ।

৫ লোকেরদের জন্ম ও বিবাহ ও মরণ প্রভৃতি ক্রিয়া।

[1] This was *Digdarśan*.

৬ ইউরোপদেশীয় লোক কর্ত্তৃক যে ২ নূতন সৃষ্টি হইয়াছে সেই সকল পুস্তক হইতে ছাপান যাইবে এবং যে ২ নূতন পুস্তক মাসে ২ ইংগ্লণ্ড হইতে আইসে সেই সকল পুস্তকে যে ২ নূতন শিল্প ও কল প্রভৃতির বিবরণ থাকে তাহাও ছাপান যাইবে।

৭ এবং ভারতবর্ষের প্রাচীন ইতিহাস ও বিদ্যা ও জ্ঞানবান লোক ও পুস্তক প্রভৃতির বিবরণ।

এই সমাচারের পত্র প্রতি শনিবারে প্রাতঃকালে সর্ব্বত্র দেওয়া যাইবে তাহার মূল্য প্রতি মাসে দেড় টাকা। প্রথম দুই সপ্তাহের সমাচারের পত্র বিনামূল্যে দেওয়া হইবে। ইহাতে যে লোকের বাসনা হইবেক তিনি আপন নাম শ্রীরামপুরের ছাপাখানাতে পাঠাইলে প্রতি সপ্তাহে তাহার নিকটে পাঠান যাইবে।

Space forbids us to make quotations from the longer articles but we select here a few short specimens relating to a variety of topics.

"বোনাপার্ট।

মোং সেন্ত হেলিনা হইতে ৪ আগস্তের সমাচার আসিয়াছে তাহাতে জানা গেল যে সেখানকার অধ্যক্ষেরা বোনাপার্টকে আরও দৃঢ়রূপে রাখিবার চেষ্টা করিতেছে যে সেনাপতিরদের জিম্বাতে তিনি ছিলেন তাহারদিগকে অকস্মাৎ বিলাতে পাঠাইয়া তাঁহাকে পুনর্ব্বার যে নূতন সেনাপতিরদের জিম্বা করিয়াছিল তাহারদের পরীবর্ত্ত করিয়া পুনর্ব্বার নূতন সেনাপতিরদের জিম্বাতে তাহাকে রাখিয়াছে ইহার হেতু আমরা এত দূরে থাকিয়া জানিতে পারি না কেবল কর্ম্ম দেখিতে পাই।" (২রা জানুয়ারী, ১৮১৯। ২০শে পৌষ, ১২২৫)।

"কলিকাতার নরদামা।

কলিকাতা শহরের খবরদারিতে যে সকল সাহেবেরা নিযুক্ত আছেন তাহারা অনুমান করিয়াছেন যে কলিকাতায় অনেক অনেক গভীর নরদামা আছে তাহাতে অন্য কোন দ্রব্য পড়িলে তাহা পচিয়া অত্যন্ত দুর্গন্ধ নির্গত হয় তাহাতে লোকেরদের সতত রোগ জন্মে। অতএব সে

সকল নরদামা বন্দ করিয়া কিঞ্চিৎ গভীর নরদামা করা যাউক।" ইত্যাদি (২৭শে মে, ১৮২০। ১৫ই জ্যৈষ্ঠ, ১২২৭)।

"বেদান্ত মত।

৯ই মে রবিবার শ্রীযুত রাধাচরণ মজুমদারের পুত্র শ্রীকৃষ্ণমোহন ও শ্রীব্রজমোহন মজুমদারের ঘরে শ্রীযুত রামমোহন রায় প্রভৃতি সকল বৈদান্তিকেরা একত্র হইলেন এবং পরস্পর আপনারদের মতের বিবেচনা করিলেন। আমরা শুনিয়াছি যে সেই সভাতে জাতির প্রতিবিধি কিম্বা নিষেধ বিষয়ে বিচার হইল এবং খাদ্যের প্রতি যে নিষেধ আছে তাহারও বিষয়ে বিচার হইল। এবং যুবতি স্ত্রীর মরণানন্তর সহমরণ না করিয়া কেবল ব্রহ্মচর্য্যে কালক্ষেপ কর্ত্তব্য এই বিষয়েও অনেক বিবেচনা হইল এবং বৈদিকধর্ম্মের বিষয়ে বিচার হইল সেই সময়ে বেদের উপনিষদ হইতে আপনারদের মতানুযায়ি বাক্য পড়া গেল ও তাহার অর্থ করা গেল ও তাঁহারা বেদান্তের মতানুসারে গীত গাইলেন।" (২২শে মে, ১৮১৯। ১০ই জ্যৈষ্ঠ, ১২২৬।

"স্কুলবুক সোসয়িটী।

১১ আক্টোবর বুধবারে কলিকাতার স্কুলবুক সোসয়িটীর তৃতীয় বৎসরীয় মিসিল হইয়াছে এবং ঐ সোসয়িটী অতি সুন্দররূপ চলিতেছে। ঐ সোসয়িটীর অতঃপাতি লোকেরা নূতন ২ প্রকার পুস্তক প্রস্তুত করেন ও বাঙ্গালা পাঠশালাতে বিতরণ করেন। তাহাতে লক্ষ্ণৌয়ের নবাব সাহেব কোম্পানির উকীল সাহেব দ্বারা স্কুলবুক সোসয়িটীর ব্যয়ের কারণ এক হাজার টাকা কলিকাতা পাঠাইয়া দিয়াছেন। শ্রীযুত মন্তেগু সাহেব ও শ্রীযুত তারিণীচরণ মিত্রজার কথাক্রমে মৃত্যুঞ্জয় বিদ্যালঙ্কারের পুত্র শ্রীযুত রামজয় তর্কালঙ্কার ঐ সোসয়িটীর কোমিটীতে আপন পিতার ভার পাইয়াছেন এবং শ্রীযুত বাবু উমানন্দ ঠাকুরও ঐ সোসয়িটীর অন্তঃপাতী হইয়াছেন এবং মৌলবী করীম হোসেন শ্রীযুক্ত লেপ্তেনন্ত ব্রাইস সাহেব ও কাজী আবদুল হমিদের কথাক্রমে পুনর্ব্বার ঐ সোসয়িটীর অন্তঃপাতী হইয়াছেন।" (২১শে অক্টোবর, ১৮২০। ৬ই কার্ত্তিক, ১২২৭)।

"নূতন পুস্তক।

শ্রীযুত ফিলিক্স কেরি সাহেব ইংণ্ডীয় (*sic*) পুস্তক হইতে সংগ্রহ করিয়া বিদ্যাহারাবলী নামে এক নূতন পুস্তক বাঙ্গালি ভাষায় করিয়া মোং শ্রীরামপুরে ছাপা করিতেছেন ইহাতে নানা প্রকার বিদ্যার কথা আছে ঐ গ্রন্থের মধ্যে আটচল্লিশ কিম্বা ছাপ্পান্ন ফর্দ একাকার কাগজেতে এবং অক্ষরেতে মাস ২ ছাপা হইবেক। ঐ আটচল্লিশ কিম্বা ছাপ্পান্ন ফর্দেতে এক নম্বর দেওয়া যাইবেক ঐ এক ২ নম্বরের মূল্য দুই ২ টাকা।" (১২ই জুন, ১৮১৯। ৩১শে জ্যৈষ্ঠ, ১২২৬)।

"উপস্থিত বক্তা।

এক সময়ে ফ্রান্স দেশের বাদশাহ রোমের প্রধান ধর্ম্মাধ্যক্ষের নিকট এক যুবা পুরুষকে আপন উকীল করিয়া পাঠাইলেন। উকীল ধর্ম্মাধ্যক্ষের নিকটে গিয়া সাক্ষাৎ করিল ও যথোপযুক্ত স্থানে বসিল। ঐ প্রতাপী ধর্ম্মাধ্যক্ষ ক্রোধপূর্ব্বক যুবা উকীলকে কহিলেন যে তোমার বাদশাহ কি আমার সহিত উপহাস করেন দেখ যাহার দাড়ী উঠে নাই এমত বালককে আমার নিকটে পাঠাইয়াছেন। ইহা শুনিয়া উকীল উত্তর করিল যে যদি আমার বাদশাহ জানিতেন যে জ্ঞান ও বিদ্যা সকলি দাড়ীর মধ্যে আছে তবে এক ছাগলকে পাঠাইলেই উপযুক্ত হইত। ইহাতে ধর্ম্মাধ্যক্ষ আন্তরিক তুষ্ট হইলেন।" (২১শে এপ্রিল, ১৮২১)।

Its subsequent history.

With regard to the subsequent history of the paper, we do not get any complete information. Long states that its existence was limited to 21 years from the date of publication[1]: in other words, it ceased to exist in 1839. Mahendranāth Bidyānidhi, in an article in the *Sāhitya Parisat Patrikā*[2] states that it continued till 1851. But both these views are not correct. From the files of the paper in the Calcutta Imperial Library (from 1831 to

[1] Long, *Return of Names and Writings, etc*, 1855, p. 145.

[2] Vol. v (1305), p. 250

1837) and in the Bengal Asiatic Society Library (from May 3, 1851 to April 24, 1852), we get clear evidence of its existence till April 24, 1852 and of the fact that there was no breach in its publication from 1831 to 1837. We also gather from an article in the *Calcutta Christian Observer* (1840)[1] that it did not cease even till 1840. In December 25, 1841 the *Samāchār Darpaṇ* disappeared for some time but it was re-born again in 1851 : because on the file of May 3, 1851 we find the numbering of the new series at "vol I. no. 1." (১ বালম। ১ সংখ্যা). On the first page also of this new series we get this editorial note

"সমাচারদর্পণের নমস্কার।

পাঠক মহাশয়েরদের সমীপে প্রাচীন দর্পণের নামে ও আকার প্রকারে উপস্থিত হওয়াতে ভরসা করি অনেক পাঠক মহাশয় আমারদিগকে বহুকালীন বৃদ্ধ বন্ধু স্বরূপ দর্শন করিয়া গ্রহণ করিবেন। যখন ১৮৪১ সালের ২৫ ডিসেম্বর তারিখে দর্পণের অদর্শন হইল তখন পুনরুদয় হওনের প্রত্যাশা ছিল না পরন্তু দেখুন পুনরুত্থিত হইলাম। এই দর্পণের নাম ও বেশ বৃদ্ধ প্রবীণের, সাহস ও শক্তি নবীনের।" ইত্যাদি (১ বালম। ১ সংখ্যা। ৩রা মে, শনিবার, ১৮৫১। ২১শে বৈশাখ, ১২৫৮ সাল)।

Its bilingual stage.

From 1831 to 1837, the paper was bilingual, being written both in Bengali and English in parallel columns. After its resurrection in 1851 it continued bilingual.[2] But there is no evidence to indicate from what precise

[1] February 1840, pp. 65-66.

[2] This is confirmed by the entry in the Appendix to the *Tenth Memoir* published from Śrīrāmpur (dated July 4, 1832) where the paper is described as written in "Bengali and English, in parallel columns" and published every Wednesday and Saturday morning. We are told in the above article in the *Patrikā* (vol. v., p. 255) that the bilingual state began in 1829. This is quite probable, though no evidence is mentioned to support the view. It is also probable as stated there that for a time, Persian found a place in it.

date it first became bilingual. From the above article in the *Christian Observer* we learn that it was written in English and in Bengali even till 1840. It would seem therefore that it continued in this state till its cesssation in 1841.

As to whether the paper had an unbroken existence from 1818 to 1831, we can determine this from indirect evidence. On every issue of 1831 and 1832, we have the numbering as volumes xiii and xiv respectively. Its first publication was in 1818, so that till 1831 we naturally expect 13 volumes to have been published, assuming its continued existence till that date : and this is confirmed by the numbering quoted. From this the conclusion is inevitable that from 1818 to 1831 (or rather to 1840) it had a continuous existence, although unfortunately we have got no file preserved from 1821 to 1831.

In 1831 it was published on every Saturday, as the head-note "Serampore. Published every Saturday morning" indicates. From 1818 to 1831, therefore, it was a weekly paper published every Saturday morning. From 1832, it became bi-weekly, as the head-note on the files of that year show—"Published every Wednesday and Saturday morning." But from November 15, 1832 it became Saturday weekly again and probably continued so till April 24, 1837. After 1851, it was still a weekly paper.

In 1818, its editor was J. C. Marshman and he probably continued in that office till 1834 ; for in the issue of November 15, 1834 we find this remark

"চন্দ্রিকাসম্পাদক মহাশয় দর্পণের বিষয়ে যে অনুগ্রহ প্রকাশক উক্তি লিখিয়াছেন তাহাতে আমরা বিশেষ বাধ্য হইলাম তাঁহার ঐ উক্তি দর্পণৈকপার্শ্বে সুপ্রকাশিত হইল। কিন্তু এক বিষয়ে তাঁহার কিঞ্চিৎ ভ্রম আছে তিনি লিখিয়াছেন দর্পণ পত্র প্রথমতঃ ৺ডাক্তার কেরী সাহেব

কর্ত্তৃক প্রকাশিত হয় ইহা প্রকৃত নহে দর্পণের এই ক্ষণকার সম্পাদক যে ব্যক্তি কেবল সেই ব্যক্তির ঝুঁকিতেই ষোল বৎসরেরও অধিক হইল অর্থাৎ দর্পণের আরম্ভাবধি এই পর্য্যন্ত প্রকাশ হইয়া আসিতেছে।" From 1857 Townsend, editor of the *Friend of India* probably conducted this paper for in the file of that year (May 3, towards the end of no. 1), we find this entry—শ্রীরামপুরের যন্ত্রালয়ে শ্রীটৌন্সেণ্ড সাহেব কর্ত্তৃক প্রকাশিত। Moreover, a correspondent of the paper writes in May 10, 1851—

"সেলাম পুরঃসর নিবেদনমিদং গবর্ণমেণ্ট গেজেট পাঠ করিয়া আমারদিগের বহুকালের শোক নিবারণ হইল যেহেতুক সত্যপ্রদীপের পরিবর্ত্তে পুনরায় সমাচারদর্পণ প্রকাশ হইতে লাগিল" ইত্যাদি।

This *Satya Pradīpa* was a weekly paper edited by Townsend. It was published in 1850[1] but it did not continue for more than a year, having ceased in 1851.[2] Probably after its cessation, Townsend took up the editorship of *Samāchār Darpaṇ*.[3]

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[1] Long, *Return relating to Bengali Publication*, 1859, p. xl.

[2] Long, *Return of Names and Writings*, 1855, p. 141.

[3] In the *Journal of Bengal Academy of Literature* (vol. i., no. 6, Jan. 6, 1898) it is said that Bhabāṇīcharaṇ Banerji was editor of *Samāchār Darpaṇ* for some time. This is very unlikely, considering the facts that from 1822 Bhabāṇī was conducting *Samāchār Chandrikā* and that there was enough antagonism of policy and views between *Chandrikā* and *Darpaṇ*.

CHAPTER VIII

Later European Writers[1]

In the publication of the periodicals described in the last chapter, it will be seen that the most active part was taken by the two Marshmans, father and son. The labours of Dr. Joshua Marshman, to whom indeed was due the consolidation of the Mission, were too varied and wide-spread to be confined chiefly to the study and encouragement of Bengali.[1] His son, John Clark Marshman, who was born in August, 1794, inherited in a large measure all his literary predilections, his great capacity for work as well as his unflagging philanthropic zeal. From 1812 he began to direct his father's religious undertakings and entered with zeal into all the labours of the mission. His reputation as a European scholar in Bengali secured for him the post of Translator in Bengali to Government, and his numerous Bengali works fully maintain this reputation. He returned to England in 1852 and died at Redcliffe Square, North Kensington, London, July 8, 1877.[2]

Other European writers of Bengali.

John Clark Marshman. 1794-1877.

[1] Chronologically speaking, the European writers of Bengali of whom enumeration follows below do not properly belong to this period; for this period ends at about 1825 and a distinctly new movement becomes dominant thereafter. The literary labours of the missionaries lose their importance and occupy only a subsidiary place in that movement after 1825. They are mentioned here in order to keep up continuity of treatment.

[2] For more details, See *Annual Register*, 1877, p. 154; *Times*, July 10, 1877; *Journ. R. A. Soc.*, 1878, vol. x, Ann. Rep. pp. xx-xxii;

J. C. Marshman was indeed a versatile and voluminous writer, both in English and Bengali, and it is not possible to give here a complete list of his works. The following are the more important works in Bengali due to him or ascribed to him :

His works

(1) ভারতবর্ষের ইতিহাস। অর্থাৎ কোম্পানি বাহাদুরের সংস্থাপনাবধি মার্কুইশ হেষ্টিংসের রাজ্যশাসনের শেষ বৎসর পর্য্যন্ত ইংলণ্ডীয়েরদের কৃত তাবদ্বিবরণ। ২ বালম। শ্রীরামপুর। ১৮৩১। or History of India from the Settlement of the E. I. Company down to the Conquest of the Pundaris by the Marquis of Hastings in 1819. 2 vols. Serampore. 1831. (Also translated from English by Gopāl Lāl Mitra, Calcutta. 1840).

(2) বাঙ্গালার ইতিহাস or History of Bengal from the Accession of Suraj-ad-Daulah to the Administration of Lord William Bentinck translated from the English of J. C. Marshman.[1] Calcutta. 1848.

(3) পুরাবৃত্তের সংক্ষেপ বিবরণ। অর্থাৎ পৃথিবীর সৃষ্টি অবধি খৃষ্টীয়ান শকের আরম্ভ পর্য্যন্ত। শ্রীরামপুর। ১৮৩৩। or Brief Survey of History in Bengalee from the Creation to the Christian era. Calcutta. 1862. (Also called ইতিবৃত্তসার).

(4) দেওয়ানি আইনের সংগ্রহ। অর্থাৎ যে সকল আইন ও আইনের অর্থ সর্কুলর অর্ডর প্রভৃতি ইংরাজী ১৭৯৩ সাল লাং ১৮৩৪ সাল হইয়াছে তাহা। শ্রীযুত জান মার্শমান সাহেব কর্ত্তৃক

Illustrated London News, 1877 ; *Law Times*, 1877 ; *Dictionary of National Biography* (a good list of his English works will be found here). Also *Dictionary of British and American Authors* ; *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1838, pt. ii, p. 216.

[1] Also translated by Wenger (2nd Edition, 1859) named বঙ্গদেশের পুরাবৃত্ত।

সংগৃহীত। শ্রীরামপুর। ১৮৩৪। or a Translation of J. C. Marshman's Guide to the Civil Law in the Presidency of Fort William containing all the unrepealed regulations, acts and circular orders of Government and summary reports of the Sudder Courts from 1793 to 1843 in 2 vols. 1843. (2nd Ed. Serampore 1849).[1]

(5)? জ্যোতিষ ও গোলাধ্যায় or a Treatise on Astronomy and Geography translated into Bengalee.[2] 2nd Edition Serampore 1819.

(6) দারোগার কর্ম্মপ্রদর্শক গ্রন্থ or a Translation of J. C. Marshman's Darogah's Manual comprising the duties of the landholders in connexion with the police. Serampore. 1851.

(7) সদ্‌গুণ ও বীর্য্যের ইতিহাস। সকল লোকের হিতার্থে বাঙ্গালা ভাষায় তর্জ্জমা করা গেল। তাহার একদিগে ইঙ্গরাজী একদিগে বাঙ্গালা। শ্রীরামপুর। ১৮২৯। or Anecdotes of Virtue and Valour translated into Bengalee and printed with the English and Bengalee Versions on opposite pages in two parts. Serampore Press. 1829.

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[1] A specimen of its legal language is given here. It will be seen that the language, although persianised is yet more easy and natural than the stiff and technical legal diction of the beginning of the century:

জমিদার ও তালুকদার ও ভূমাধিকারী ও ইজারাদার প্রভৃতির সাধ্য আছে যে তাহারদিগের কাহার মালগুজারীর বাকী দাওয়া কোন মফঃস্বল তালুকদার রাইয়ৎ প্রভৃতির উপর থাকিলে যদি সেই বাকী টাকা মাল ক্রোক করণের দ্বারা আদায় করিতে না পারেন তবে সেই বাকীদার অথবা তাহার মালজামিনের স্থানে সেই বাকী তলব করিতে অথবা সেই বাকীদার মালজামিন পলাইতে উদ্যত হইলে তাহাকে তলব না করিয়া ঐ পলায়নোন্মুখ বাকীদার কি মালজামিনকে নীচের লিখিতমতে কয়েদ করিতে পারেন। ইত্যাদি—(vol. ii, p. 4.)

[2] Published anonymously.

(8) ক্ষেত্রবাগান বিবরণ অর্থাৎ আগ্রিকলচরাল ও হটিকলচরাল সোসাইটির নিষ্পাত্ত কার্য্যের বিবরণ পুস্তক or Agri-Horticultural transactions by J. Marshman in two volumes. 1832-36.

(9) Abridgement of Carey's Dictionary.[1]

and their literary worth.

It will be noticed from the above enumeration, that some of these works hardly put forward any claim to literary merit whatsoever, as they are composed on strictly non-literary subjects, while the historical treatises, more or less closely allied to literature pure or proper, are again mere translations or replicas of English originals.[2] Marshman's style, like that of most of the European writers of Bengali enumerated below, possesses hardly any characteristic distinction of its own. Indeed there is such a pervading uniformity and general sameness of character in the writings of these European scholars that it would be scarcely necessary to take and comment upon the style and peculiarities of each. We shall, on the other hand, content ourselves, wherever necessary, by giving specimens of their general style in individual cases. The following extract from ভারতবর্ষের ইতিহাস, the theme of which dealing as it does with historical narrative affords some scope indeed for literary expression, will serve as a specimen of Marshman's style; but it will be noticed that it presents hardly any distinctive feature at all and is greatly inferior to the manner of many of his European colleagues and fellow-writers in the same field:—

[1] See page 152 and footnote thereon. Other works ascribed by Long are: (1) Æsop's Fables translated. (2) Murray's Grammar in Bengali (*Return of Names and Writings, etc.*, p. 134).

[2] These are the volumes which were intended to form a series of elementary works on History and Science for the use of Indian youths (see Preface to Mack's কিমিয়া বিদ্যার সার. Serampore. 1834) noticed below.

পলাসির যুদ্ধ।

পলাসিতে নবাব সাহেবের পূর্ব্বকালাবধি কতক সৈন্য ছাউনি করিয়া রহিয়াছিল এবং ইংলণ্ডীয়েরা যে রাত্রিতে সে স্থানে পহুছিলেন ঐ দিবস নবাব সাহেব স্বয়ং সে স্থানে উপস্থিত হইলেন। তাঁহার সঙ্গে পঞ্চাশ সহস্র পদাতিক এবং অষ্টাদশ সহস্র অশ্বারূঢ় এবং পঞ্চাশটা তোপ ছিল। ইংলণ্ডীয়েরদের কেবল নয়শত গোরা তাহার মধ্যেও একশত গোলন্দাজ ও পঞ্চাশ জন মল্ল তদ্ভিন্ন একশত জন টোপস ও দুইহাজার একশত সিপাহী সর্ব্বসুদ্ধা তিন সহস্র একশত সৈন্য ছিল। তাবৎ দিবস ব্যাপিয়া সংগ্রাম হইল এবং যুদ্ধ প্রায় গোলাক্ষেপেতে নিষ্পন্ন হইল তাহাতে সুবাদার অত্যন্ত ভীত হইয়া অনিষ্টচেষ্টকেরদের পরামর্শেতে বেলাবসানে আপন সৈন্যেরদিগকে পশ্চাৎ হটিতে আজ্ঞা দিলেন ইহা দেখিয়া মীরজাফর আপন সৈন্য পৃথক করিলেন তাহাতে ক্লাইব সাহেবের মনেতে নিশ্চয় হইল যে মীরজাফর আমারদের পক্ষে হইবেক অতএব তিনি ইংলণ্ডীয় সৈন্যেরদিগকে অগ্রসর হইয়া রণভূমিস্থ নবাব সাহেবের অবশিষ্ট সৈন্যের উপর আক্রমণ করিতে আজ্ঞা দিলেন। এই দুই দুর্ঘটনাতে অর্থাৎ মীরজাফরের বিশ্বাসঘাতকতাতে ও ইংলণ্ডীয় সৈন্যের অগ্রসরণ দেখিয়া নবাব সাহেবের মন যে কিঞ্চিৎ দোলায়মান ছিল সে স্থির হইল এবং তিনি দুই সহস্র লোক হইয়া অতি বেগগামি উষ্ট্রারোহণ পূর্ব্বক পলায়ন করিলেন। নবাব সাহেবের পলায়ন দেখিয়া সকলেই যুদ্ধেতে অমনোযোগী হইল অতএব ইংলণ্ডীয় সৈন্য বৈকালে পাঁচঘণ্টা সময় বিপক্ষেরদের ছাউনিতে প্রবেশ করিল। এইরূপে কুড়ি জন গোরা হত ও আঘাতী হওয়াতে এবং ষোলজন সিপাহী হত ও ছত্রিশ জন আঘাতী হওয়াতে অতি বৃহদ্রাজ্যের ও ছয়কোটি লোকের পরিবর্ত্তন হইল। (Vol. I. p. 131) [1]

[1] See also, for an account of the same battle, the author's বঙ্গদেশের পুরাবৃত্ত (Ed. Wenger), pp. 163-166. It is interesting to compare these accounts with that given by Rājīb-lochan in his *Krsnna Chandra Rāyer Charitra*.

The next name[1] that we take up is Ward's but we can dismiss it with a few words, as it is not one of any primary importance to Bengali literature. Ward's services as a printer to the Śrīrāmpur Press cannot indeed be exaggerated but his direct connexion with Bengali literature was of the slightest kind. Possibly he could not even speak Bengali so fluently as his colleagues did[2] and the only work which he wrote in Bengali—not remarkable either for its form or for its matter—was পীতাম্বর সিংহের চরিত্র or Memoir of Pitamber Sing, a native Christian.[3]

William Ward. 1769-1823.

William Carey's son, Felix Carey, however, contributed some of the important works to the literature of the period. Felix Carey was born in October 22, 1786 and died at Śrīrāmpur in November 10, 1822. Within this brief space of life, he applied himself successfully to the philanthropic and missionary work with which his father had been identified and collaborated with him in his literary undertakings. He was a medical missionary of great skill, a first-rate printer trained by Ward, and a scholar in Sanscrit and Pali, Bengali and Burmese, not unworthy his father.[4] He was not only a coadjutor of Rām-kamal Sen[5] but himself planned (1818) the scheme[6]

Felix Carey. 1786-1822.

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[1] See p. 106 *ante*.

[2] E. Carey, *Memoir of Carey*, p. 424.

[3] 4th Ed. Calcutta. 1843.

[4] For more details about his life and writings, see Marshman, *Life and Times of Carey*, etc.; *Bengal Obituary*, pp. 249-250; Smith, *Life of William Carey* (many references); *Dictionary of National Biography*.

[5] *Bengal Obituary*, p. 250.

[6] See বিদ্যাহারাবলী পাঠকেরদের প্রতি মেং ফেলিকস কেরী সাহেবের পত্র। appended to F. Carey's বিদ্যাহারাবলী তৎপ্রথমগ্রন্থ বাবচ্ছেদবিদ্যা।

of bringing out an edition of Bengali encyclopœdia. His untimely death prevented him from carrying out his design to a successful issue but he had the satisfaction of seeing the first volume of the series, a treatise on Anatomy, published before he died. His chief works in Bengali are: (1) ব্রিটন দেশীয় বিবরণ সঞ্চয় or an Abridgement of the History of England, from the invasion of Julius Cæsar to the death of George the Second by Dr. Goldsmith and continued by an eminent writer to the Peace of Amiens in the year 1802, translated into Bengalee by Felix Carey. Serampore. 1820; Republished by the School Book Society. (2) যাত্রিরদের অগ্রসর বিবরণ, or the Pilgrim's Progress translated into Bengalee by F. Carey. 2 Parts. Serampore. 1821-22. Edition by J. D. Pearson, 1834: by Wenger, 1852. (3) বিদ্যাহারাবলী অর্থাৎ বাঙ্গালা ভাষায় কৃত ইউরোপীয় সর্ব্বগ্রাহ্য তাবৎ আয়ুর্ব্বেদ শিল্পবিদ্যাদি মূলগ্রন্থাবলী। তৎপ্রথমগ্রন্থ। ব্যবচ্ছেদবিদ্যা। ফিলিক্স কেরী কর্তৃক পঞ্চমবার-ছাপাকৃত এনসেক্লোপেদিয়া ব্রিটানিকা নাম গ্রন্থাবলী হইতে বাঙ্গালা ভাষায় কৃত। গরিষ্ঠ উলিআম্ কেরী কর্তৃক তর্জমা বিবেচিত এবং শ্রীকান্ত বিদ্যালঙ্কার কর্তৃক ভাষা বিবেচিত ও শ্রীকবিচন্দ্র তর্কশিরোমণি কর্তৃক সাহায্যীকৃত। শ্রীরামপুরে মিশিয়ন ছাপাখানাতে ছাপাকৃত। সন ১৮২০। or Vidyaharabulee or Bengalee Encyclopœdia. Vol. I. Anatomy. translated into Bengalee from the 5th edition of Encyclopœdia Britannica by F. Carey. Assisted by Sreekanta Vidyaiunkar and Shree Kobichundra Turkasiromoni, Pundits. The whole revised by Rev. W. Carey D. D. Serampore. Printed at the Mission Press. 1820. (Nov. 1).[1]

His works

[1] Other works attributed to F. Carey are:—(i) Translation of Mill's *History of India* (Smith, *Life of William Carey*, p. 204; *Bengal Obituary*, p. 250) published by School Book Society. (ii) Translation of Goldsmith's *Vicar of Wakefield* (*Dict. of National Biography*). (iii) A Work of Land in Bengali (*Bengal Obituary*, p. 205). *Bivracoga* is

From a literary point of view, however, none of these works is delectable to the general reader and we may pass over them without any special comment. But the last-named publication has an interest of its own as the first vernacular work on a scientific subject written on the western lines. It will be hardly within our scope to give a detailed analysis of the book but an enumeration of the chief heads of subjects dealt with will sufficiently explain its scope and object. It is divided into three parts (কাণ্ড), each part containing several chapters (খণ্ড) and each chapter divided into sections (অধ্যায়), which are again subdivided into paragraphs or articles (পর্ব্ব). The first part deals with Osteology (অস্থিবিদ্যা), second part with Comparative Anatomy (তুল্যাতুল্য ব্যবচ্ছেদবিদ্যা) while the third part traces the history and progress of the Science (ব্যবচ্ছেদবিদ্যোৎপত্তি-কারণ) and gives a list of the principal Hindu works (then known) on "the subject of Anatomy, Medicine and Chymistry" with the names of their authors and a brief account of their contents. The whole is rounded off with a glossary of technical and difficult terms (ব্যবচ্ছেদবিদ্যাসংজ্ঞার্থজ্ঞাপক এক অভিধান) which, in certain respects, is the most interesting part of the entire treatise. This enormous volume of about 700 pages, however, is hardly commendable for its stiff and laboured style, bristling as it does with unintelligible technical terms and phrases, but it certainly bears testimony to

Importance of his scientific writings.

undoubtedly incorrect in giving 1818 as the date of publication of F. Carey's Anatomy. Dinesh Chandra Sen (*History of Bengali Lit.*, p. 872) erroneously gives the title of F. Carey's Anatomy as "Hadavali Vidyā" (হাড়াবলী বিদ্যা) obviously mistaking the name বিদ্যাহারাবলী or cyclopœdia of knowledge. This book will also be found in the list of School Book Society's publication before 1821.

the complier's learning, his careful research, and his unwearied industry. The following will serve as a specimen of its harsh and difficult style :—

পৃষ্ঠের কণ্টাকৃতি প্রবর্দ্ধনযুক্ত ঐ মাংসপেশী উর্দ্ধস্থ কট্যাবর্ত্তকের এবং অধঃস্থ পৃষ্ঠাবর্ত্তকের কণ্টাকৃতি প্রবর্দ্ধনেতে উৎপন্ন হয় এবং উর্দ্ধস্থ নবপৃষ্ঠাবর্ত্তকের কণ্টকাকৃতি প্রবর্দ্ধনেতে প্রবিষ্ট হয়। পৃষ্ঠের কণ্টক প্রবর্দ্ধনপ্রযুক্ত ঐ মাংসপেশী কশেরুকাবর্ত্তকাকে উত্তোলন করে (p. 161)। অপর ঐ গলাগ্রকাকুদের লুণ্ঠমান পর্দার উভয়পার্শ্বে স্থিত অতি বৃহদ্ গুটিকা নামে মাংসগ্রন্থিদ্বয়েতে সর্ব্বদা আর্দ্রভাবে থাকে ঐ মাংসগ্রন্থিদ্বয় বাদামবীজাকৃতি প্রযুক্ত কোনো ২ ব্যবচ্ছেদকেরা তাহারদিগের বাদাম-গুটিকা সংজ্ঞা করিয়াছেন (p. 232)।

The Glossary, however, though not always accurate and expressive yet a praiseworthy attempt, is interesting to the student of the language. It covers about 40 pages of close print and is exhaustive as far as the efforts of the compiler could reach, who himself was fully cognisant of the difficulties of his task.[1]

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[1] For the difficulties of his subject and his style as well as the imperfection of his glossary, the compiler does not forget to make an ample apology—

অপর সকল বিদ্যাগ্রন্থে সংজ্ঞাশব্দ না হইলে নির্ব্বাহ হয় না অতএব যে স্থানে উপযুক্তসংজ্ঞা পাওয়া গিয়াছে তাহাই গৃহীতা হইয়াছে কিন্তু যে যে স্থানে উপযুক্তসংজ্ঞা পাওয়া যায় নাই সেই সেই স্থানে সাধ্যানুসারে সংস্কৃত সংজ্ঞা গঠান গিয়াছে এবং তদ্বিষয়ে এতদ্দেশীয় তাবদ্গ্রন্থ আলোচিত হইয়াছে। অপর কহি উপযুক্ত সংজ্ঞা-গঠনই অতিদুঃসাধ্য কার্য্য অতএব এই বিদ্যাহারাবলী গ্রন্থেতে যে যে সংজ্ঞা অনুপযুক্তা বোধ হয় সেই সকল জ্ঞাত করাইলে এবং তৎপরীবর্ত্তনে অন্য সংজ্ঞা দেওনে পারক হইলে অত্যাহ্লাদ বিষয় হয় জানিবেন। অপর কেহ কেহ বিবেচনা করিয়া কহিয়াছেন যে সকলের সুবোধগম্য গ্রন্থ ছাপা কর না কেন এবং সহজ ভাষায় কি জন্যে রচনা কর না তদ্বিষয়ে উত্তর করি যে তাবদ্ বিদ্যাগ্রন্থ কঠিন অতএব সহজ ভাষায় তর্জ্জমা প্রায় হয় না। অপর ইহাও বিবেচনা করুন বহ্ন্যভ্যাসব্যতিরিক্ত কোনো এক বিদ্যাজ্ঞ হওয়া যায় না এবং যাঁহারা অভ্যাস করে তাঁহারদের মধ্যে সকলেই পরিপক্ক হন না

Among other European Missionary writers at Śrīrāmpur, the name of Rev. John Mack, unassuming as it is, is interesting to the student of the literary history of the time. He was born in March 12, 1797, a native of Edinburgh, his father having been a writer to the signet. He was educated at the Edinburgh University and distinguished himself at the Baptist College at Bristol. On his visit to England during 1819-21 in search of funds and men for the proposed Serampore College, Ward selected Mack to be a Professor at the College, where the latter arrived in November 1821. Mack worked as a Professor for 16 years, succeeded Marshman in the charge of the College and raised it to be for some time a first-rate private educational institution in Bengal. Mack was highly proficient in Classics, Mathematics and Natural Science, and gave the first chemical lectures (in Bengali as well as in English) in Calcutta. He also shared the editorial management of the *Friend of India* at Śrīrāmpur from its commencement. He died of cholera in April 30, 1845.

John Mack. 1797–1845.

Mack's only, and in certain respects noteworthy, contribution to Bengali consists of a treatise on Chemistry, the first of its kind in Bengali, named কিমিয়া বিদ্যার সার। শ্রীযুত জান মাক সাহেবের কর্ত্তৃক রচিত হইয়া গৌড়ীয় ভাষায় অনুবাদিত হইল or the Principles of Chemistry by John Mack translated into Bengalee (Serampore Press. 1834). It is divided into 2 parts[1] the first part covering about 337 pages, prefaced by an interesting introduction written

His scientific writing.

তবে অনেক বিদ্যাতে সকলেই কি প্রকারে হঠাৎ পরিপক্ক হইতে পারিবেন। (বিদ্যাহারাবলীগ্রন্থ পাঠকেরদের প্রতি মেং ফিলিক্স কেরী সাহেবের পত্রমিদং।

[1] The second part was never possibly published.

in English. It opens with the treatment of কিমিয়া প্রভাব or chemical forces such as আকর্ষণ, তাপক, আলোক, বিদ্যুতীয় সাধন, etc., and then goes on to deal with কিমিয়া বস্তু or chemical substances.[1] Many of the theories and conclusions stated here have long been abandoned but they give us, through the medium of Bengali, a good picture of the state of the dimly understood chemical science as it obtained eighty years ago. Even after the lapse of more than half a century and with a better understanding and demand of this useful science, it is to be regretted that Bengali language cannot as yet boast of a single good treatise on Chemistry, not to speak of scientific literature in general; yet this missionary, with a scanty vocabulary and imperfect command over the language[2] ventured with singular courage

[1] Viz. Oxygen, Chlorine, Bromine, Hydrogen, Nitrogen, Sulphur, Phosphorus, Carbon, Boron, Selenium. There is also a section on **Steam Engine.**

[2] It is said in the *Bengal Obituary* (p. 250) that Mack's work written in English was translated by F. Carey, but this is doubtful. (See also E.C. Wenger, *Story of Lalbazar Baptist Church*, 1908). In this connexion, it would be interesting to call attention to the question raised by Mack, which is also referred to by F. Carey but of which there seem to have been no satisfactory solution as yet, *viz.*, the question relating to the proper method of compiling a glossary of technical scientific terms in Bengali. We will not enter into the vexed question whether we should take European terms bodily into our language or adapt them to our use by Sanscrit substitution or otherwise, but we may be allowed to quote here the opinion of Mack as set forth in the Preface to his work and leave it to speak for itself. "The names of Chemical substances are in the great majority of instances, perfectly new to the Bengali language, as they were but few years ago to all languages. The chief difficulty was to determine whether the European nomenclature should be merely put into bengalee letters or the European terms be entirely translated by Sungskrit, as bearing much the same relation to Bengalee as the Greek and Latin do to English.

Glossary of technical terms.

and noble aim to open up a useful though neglected field of knowledge and culture. We cannot but speak with admiration of the work of these early missionary writers in all departments of useful knowledge, and we may be forgiven if we dwell rather long on this early Bengali treatise on a scientific subject. The object of this publication is thus given in the Preface: "Mr. Marshman having proposed some years ago to publish an original series of elementary works on history and science, for the use of youths in India, I count it a privilege to be associated with him in the undertaking and cheerfully promised to furnish such parts of the series as was more intimately connected with my own studies. Other engagements have retarded the execution of our project, much against our will. He has therefore been able to do no more than bring out the first part of his Brief Survey of History, and now, at length, I am permitted to add to it this first volume of the Principles of Chemistry." With the object of teaching rudiments of the science to the Indian youth in view, Mack thought it best to write his work in Bengali, scarcely fit though it was for the expression of scientific ideas. "Be it understood," he says, "the native youths of India are those for whom we chiefly labour; and their own tongue is the great instrument by which we hope to enlighten them." The book, chiefly meant to be a text-book, for which however its style is difficult enough, was compiled chiefly from the notes of lectures which the writer delivered to his pupils in Calcutta and Śrīrāmpur. It is hardly necessary to speak any thing of its language

.....I have preferred, therefore, expressing the European terms in Bengalee character, merely changing the words into the prefixes and terminology, so as decently to incorporate the new language." For a sketch of John Mack's life, see Carey, *Oriental Christian Biography*, vol. i., pp. 282-286. Also *Bengal Obituary*.

and manner. We can hardly expect anything better than what we have already seen—for the theme here is science, the writer an Englishman and the Bengali is the Bengali of almost a century ago: yet it must be noted that the language of this work is more simple and easy certainly than that of Felix Carey or even of some of the more abstruse writers of scientific text-books in the present day. One or two specimens are selected here :—

অনেক প্রকার বস্তুর কিমিয়ালয় উৎপন্ন হইলে আলোক নির্গত হয়। অতএব যে সময়ে দহন হয় সে সময় সকলেই জানে যে আলোক নির্গত হয় কিন্তু যে বস্তুতে কখন দহনোৎপত্তি হয় না সে বস্তুর লয়েতেও আলোক নির্গত হয়।

আলোক কিমিয়া প্রভাবের মত কোন ২ বস্তুর পরস্পর লয়নিষ্পাদক এবং কোন ২ বস্তুর লয়নাশক হয়। এই প্রকার কার্য্য পরে কহা যাইবেক। আলোক ও বিদ্যুতীয় সাধন কোন ২ কার্য্য একরূপে নিষ্পন্ন করে। অপর সূর্য্যের তেজেতেও কিন্তু বিশেষ বিওলা (violet) বর্ণ কিরণেতে সূচি রাখিলে ক্রমে ২ চুম্বক প্রস্তরের গুণ প্রাপ্ত হয় কিন্তু যে পরীক্ষাতে ইহা স্থিরীকৃত হয় তৎপরীক্ষাতে কিঞ্চিৎ সন্দেহ আছে (p. 107, Sec. 160–161)।

হৈদ্রজানের দ্বিতীয়াক্সিদ। সামুদ্রিক অম্লবিশিষ্ট জলের মধ্যে বারিমের পরমাক্সিদ রাখা গেলে তাহা কতক অক্সিজান হারাইয়া প্রথম অক্সিদ হয় এবং তদবস্থাতে উক্ত অম্লেতে লীন হয় এবং উপযুক্ত উপায় উপস্থিত হইলে ঐ হারান অক্সিজান জলের হৈদ্রজানেতে লীন হইলে তাহাতে জলের দ্বিতীয়াক্সিদ জন্মে (p. 177, Sec. 258)।

আলোকের চলন ও কার্য্যের দ্বারা অনেকে বোধ করে যে সে এক প্রকার বস্তু। কিন্তু কোন ২ ব্যক্তি অনুমান করেন যে সে বস্তু নহে কেবল বস্তুর মধ্যগত একপ্রকার বিশেষ সংলড়ন দ্বারা উৎপন্ন (p. 103, Sec. 150).

Of the other missionaries, who belonged to the Baptist Mission and wrote some tracts and text-books, it is not necessary to dwell long upon the names of Lawson, Robinson, Wenger or Pearce. John Lawson (1787-1825) wrote a treatise on Natural History called পশ্বাবলী which was published by the School Book Society before 1821.[1] John Robinson, some time editor of the *Evangelist*, translated Robinson Crusoe,[2] Bunyan's Holy War, and Carey's Grammar into Bengali. John Wenger,[3] (1811-1880) who was an associate of Dr. Yates and revised his Bengali Bible (1861), edited the *Upadeśaka*, compiled a Bengali Grammar, translated Marshman's History,[4] and wrote or edited a few tracts and school-books.

John Lawson.

John Robinson.

John Wenger.

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[1] It was in six numbers, *viz.*: 1. The Lion and the Jackal (subsequently published as সিংহের বিবরণ) 2. The Bear. 3. The Elephant. 4. The Rhinoceros and the Hippopotamus. 5. The Tiger. 6. The Cat. For a sketch of Lawson's life, see Carey, *Orient. Christ. Biography.* (vol. ii. pp. 415–425.).

[2] (১) রবিন্‌সন্ ক্রুশোর জীবন চরিত or the Adventures of Robinson Crusoe translated by J. R. and illustrated with woodcuts. 2nd ed. 1885. pp. 1–261 (২) ধর্ম্মযুদ্ধের বৃত্তান্ত, অর্থাৎ আন্তরিক রিপু ও সয়তান প্রভৃতির সঙ্গে খ্রীষ্টীয় লোকেরদের যেরূপ যুদ্ধ হয় তাহার বিবরণ। জান বানন সাহেবের রচিত ও রাবিন্‌সন্ সাহেবের কর্ত্তৃক অনুবাদিত হইয়া শ্রীরামপুরের যন্ত্রালয়ে মুদ্রাঙ্কিত হইল। ১৮৫৯। (Second Edition, 1859) illustrated also by woodcuts, pp. 1–316. Also wrote গঙ্গার খালের সংক্ষেপ বিবরণ or an Account of the Ganges Canal, pp. 1-19, 1854? This Robinson must not be confounded with another Robinson who was Government Inspector of Schools in Assam and wrote a work on mensuration called ভূমি পরিমাণ (or Elements of Land Surveying) in 1850 which was reviewed in the *Friend of India* of Sept. 12, 1850.

[3] See Buckland's *Dictionary of Indian Biography.*

[4] See p. 249 footnote *ante.*

William Hopkins Pearce (1794-1840) who came out to India (1817) as an assistant of Ward and subsequently joined the Calcutta Baptist Printing Establishment, was for several years editor of the *Christian Observer* and wrote a few school-books [1] and Christian tracts. He is chiefly remembered now for his interest in education and his connexion with School Book Society in which he succeeded Dr. Yates as secretary.

W. H. Pearce. 1794-1840.

But the name of William Yates cannot be passed over so lightly. Dr. Yates, son of a shoe-maker and himself a village school-master for some time, was born at Loughborough, Dec. 15, 1792. He entered the Baptist College at Bristol where he studied the Oriental languages and came out to India on April 16, 1815 under the patronage of the Baptist Missionary Society. He joined Carey at Śrīrāmpur, studied Sanscrit and Bengali under him and helped him extensively in his literary work. In 1817 he left Carey and joined the Baptist Society at Calcutta,

William Yates. 1792-1845.

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[1] His works, among other things, are :—(*i*) ভূগোল বৃত্তান্ত। অর্থাৎ গোলাকার পৃথিবীস্থ দেশবিভাগ ও নদী ও পর্ব্বত ও নগর আর রাজত্ব ও ধর্ম্ম ও মনুষ্য সংখ্যা ও বাণিজ্য ও প্রাচীন সত্তা ইতিহাস ইত্যাদি বিবরণ or Geography interspersed with information historical and miscellaneous for the use of schools in 6 parts. Calcutta. 1818. Ed. in 1822; also 1843. (*ii*) সত্য আশ্রয়। দুই পথিকের উত্তম কথোপকথন or the True Refuge; a Christian tract. Calcutta ? 1822 ?. W. H. Pearce must not be confounded with G. Pearce who wrote or edited (1) কাল্পনিক ইতিহাস। 1838 (2) ধর্ম্মপুস্তকের পাঠোপকারক or Companion to the Bible translated by Rām Krsna Kabirāj and revised by G. Pearce 1846. (3) বৈধর্ম্ম নিবারক পত্র। or Foolish Galatians or Inconstancy in Faith exposed and Antidote supplied (pp. 1-59). Calcutta 1845 ? For more details about W. H. Pearce's life and writing see *Life of W. H. Pearce* by William Yates; *Bengal Obituary*, pp. 221-222: *Missionary Herald*, 1828; Carey, *Orient. Christ. Biography*, vol. iii, pp. 1-14 (a list of his works given at p. 10).

becoming pastor of the English Church at Circular Road in 1829-30. In 1824 he became Secretary of the School Book Society and got large opportunities for carrying out his educational projects. His educational works received considerable encouragement from Government which not only subsidised him but offered him a stipend of £1,000 on condition of his devoting himself to such work—an offer which he declined.[1] He died at sea on July 3, 1845. His works in Bengali are numerous but they were all published between 1817 and 1827 and consist chiefly of—

1. The New Testament translated, 1833. Ed. in 1839.

2. The Holy Bible in Bengali. 1845. pp. 1-1144 (subsequently revised by J. Wenger and C. B. Lewis in 1861 and 1867). See Appendix II at the end of this volume.

3. হিতোপদেশ (expurgated edition). 1841.

4. পদার্থ বিদ্যা or Natural Philosophy and History. 1824.

5. পদার্থ-বিদ্যা-সার। অর্থাৎ বালকেরদিগের পদার্থ শিক্ষার্থে কথোপকথন or Elements of Natural Philosophy and Natural History in a series of familiar dialogues designed for the instruction of Indian youth. Calcutta 1825. 2nd Ed. 1834. Published by the School Book Society.[2]

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[1] For more details about his life and work see James Hoby, *Memoir of William Yates* (1847); *Dictionary of National Biography*; *Bengal Obituary*, pp. 222-225; *Dictionary of British and Foreign Authors*, vol. iii; *Cal. Chr. Observ.* 1845; *Eclectic Review*, vol. iv; *Cal. Rev.*, vol. x, p. 162 *et seq*; *Catalogue of British and Foreign Bible Society*, 1857, p. 332, etc.; W. H. Carey, *Oriental Christian Biography*, vol. I, pp. 29, 48; *India Review*, vol. vii, 1843, pp. 740-743, in which will be found an excellent likeness of Dr. Yates by Grant.

[2] This work, although on a scientific subject, avoids scientific technicalities as much as possible and constitutes an eminently readable popular exposition of the broad topics of Natural Philosophy and History and is indeed the first of its kind.

6. *Introduction to the Bengalee Language* in two volumes. 1840. 2nd Ed. by J. Wenger, 1847. Containing a grammar, a reader and explanatory notes with an index (in vol. I) and selections from Bengali literature (in vol. II). The author's Preface says that "it consists of two volumes, the first of which is chiefly of European and the second entirely of native composition." The first volume contains a grammar, select reading lessons consisting of simple sentences, fables, anecdotes, etc. : while the second contains in "a condensed and corrected form" the best parts of all the native (mostly prose) compositions in Bengali. The selections are from Totā Itihās (18 tales), Lipimālā

The style and manner are more narrative than philosophical or scientific. The form is that of a dialogue between a teacher and his pupil who is curious to acquire an insight into the mysteries of the natural phenomena. This work is chiefly compiled from Martinet's Catechism of Nature and Baley's Useful Knowledge. The subjects embraced are too many but they are dealt with in a popular and rather summary way. After giving in the first few chapters some account of the mysteries of the Heavens (আকাশস্থ গ্রহাদি বিষয়) and the atmosphere (স্থির বায়ু ও সামান্য বায়ু ও বাষ্পসৃষ্টি প্রভৃতির বিশেষ কথন), the teacher discourses on the earth (পৃথিবীর ও সমুদ্রের বিষয়) and the human being (মনুষ্য বিষয়ক কথা) and then goes on from the sixth dialogue to the description of the animal and the vegetable kingdoms, concluding with a few words on the minerals and on the products of various countries. Here is a specimen both of its science and its style : -

শিষ্য। নক্ষত্রপতনের যে দর্শন হয় সেটা কি ?

গুরু। সে নক্ষত্রপতন নয় কিন্তু সূর্য্য সন্তাপদ্বারা যে কোন বস্তুর বাষ্প আকাশে উঠে তাহার মধ্যে স্ফুলিঙ্গ প্রবিষ্ট হওয়াতে তাহা প্রজ্বলিত হয়। তাহাতে যে পদার্থ সে সকল দগ্ধ না হয় তাবৎ ঐরূপ দর্শন হয়।

শিষ্য। রাত্রিকালে যে আলেয়ার দর্শন হয় সে কি ?

গুরু। অনুমান হয় যাহাতে অগ্নির যোগ আছে এমন কোন বায়ু বিশেষ হইবে কিম্বা মৃত বৃক্ষ ও পত্র হইতে নির্গত কোন সূক্ষ্ম বস্তু অগ্নির স্ফুলিঙ্গের যোগ হওয়াতে প্রজ্বলিত হয়। (2nd edition, p. 14).

(9 letters), Batriś Siṁhāsan (14 stories), Rājābalī (8 extracts), Rājā Kṛṣṇachandra Rāyer Charitra (8 extracts) Puruṣ-parīkṣā (16 stories), Jñyān Chandrikā (9 pieces), Jñānāṇṇab (9 extracts), Prabodh-chandrikā (4 stories) besides extracts from Tathyaprakāś, Mahābhārat (story of Nala), Hymns of Rām-mohon and specimens of the periodical literature of the day.

(7) জ্যোতির্বিদ্যা যুবলোকের শিক্ষার্থে or An Easy Introduction to Astronomy for young persons composed by James Ferguson F. R. S. and revised by David Brewster LL.D. and translated into Bengalee by William Yates. Calcutta School Book Society. 1838.[1]

(8) সারসংগ্রহঃ or Vernacular Class Book Reader for the Government Colleges and Schools translated into Bengali. Calcutta Baptist Mission Press. 1844.

(9) Translation of Doddridge's Rise and Progress of Religion. Anglo-Bengali. pp. 1–300. 1840 (Murdoch, *Catalogue*).[2]

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[1] The Introduction (ভূমিকা) says :—ফার্গুসন সাহেবের লিখিত এই পুস্তক সম্প্রতি শ্রীযুক্ত য়াতি সাহেব কর্তৃক বঙ্গভাষাতে রচিত হইল ইহা পাঠ করিলে যুবকেরা জ্যোতির্বিদ্যা জ্ঞাত হইতে পারিবে। This work is composed almost on the same lines as the author's পদার্থবিদ্যাসার। From the table of contents quoted below, the subjects embraced will be found to be pretty extensive : (*i*) পৃথিবীর গতি ও আকার পরিমানের বিবরণ (pp. 1–16). (*ii*) সকল বস্তুর তোলন নির্ণি ও সূর্য্যাদিগ্রহ বিবরণ (pp. 17 35). (*iii*) গুরুত্ব ও দীপ্তির বিষয় (pp. 36–54). (*iv*) ইংরাজী ১৭৬১ সনে সূর্য্যের উপর শুক্রগ্রহের অতিক্রম এবং ঐ অতিক্রম দ্বারা প্রথমে যেরূপে সূর্য্য হইতে গ্রহগণের দূরত্ব নিশ্চয় হয় তাহার বিবরণ (pp. 54–68). (*v*) পৃথিবীর দীর্ঘতা ও প্রশস্ততা নির্ণয়ার্থক নিয়ম কথন (pp. 68–83). (*vi*) দিবারাত্রির হ্রাস বৃদ্ধির কারণ ও ঋতুগণের পরিবর্ত্ত ও চন্দ্রের ষোড়শ কলার বিবরণ (pp. 83–100). (*vii*) পৃথিবী প্রদক্ষিণকারি চন্দ্রের গতি ও চন্দ্র সূর্য্য গ্রহণের বিবরণ (pp. 100–118). (*viii*) সমুদ্রের জোয়ার ভাটার বিষয় (pp. 118-132) (*ix*) ধ্রুবতারার বিষয় ও সূর্য্য ও তারাগণের সময় বিশেষ নিরূপণ (pp. 132–139). (*x*) গ্রহাদি নিরূপণ (pp. 139–159).

Yates's *Jyotirbidyā.*

[2] Besides these, Long (*Return of Names, etc.*) mentions also a translation of Doddridge's Rise and Progress; and the

Of the other Missionary Societies, the London Mission which came into being a little later, took some part in the encouragement of the vernacular and promotion of education through that medium. Many of its missionaries, in these early days of text-book writing, composed numerous educational works of value and usefulness: but it would be sufficient for our purpose if we take into consideration the names Robert May, J. Harley, J. D. Pearson, and James Keith. The first three of these missionaries, however, whose names are linked together like those of the three great Śrīrāmpur brethren, are remembered not so much for their literary efforts as in connexion with their numerous flourishing vernacular schools established between Kalna and Chinsurah. In July 1814, Robert May,[1] with a very narrow income, opened a free vernacular school in his dwelling house at Chinsurah but within a year he succeeded in establishing fifteen more schools with 951

London Missionary Society.

Robert May. 1788–1818.

Bengal Obituary (p. 225) adds Pleasing Tales, Epitome of Ancient History (also Hobby, *op. cit.*, p. 211), Celebrated Characters of Ancient History, a translation of Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress Pt. I, and of Baxter's Call to the Unconverted (Also Murdoch, *Catalogue*). Besides these, Yates, like many other missionaries mentioned here, wrote numerous Christian Tracts. He also wrote a *Bengalee Grammar*, ed. Wenger. Calcutta, 1849. See W. H. Carey, *Oriental Christian Biography*, vol. i, p. 44; also *India Review*, vol. vii, 1843

[1] See *Asiatic Journal*, vol. iii, 1817, p. 500; *Bengal Obituary*, p. 208; *Cal. Rev.* vol. 1850, art: "*Bengali Literature and Language*"; Lushington, *History, Design and Present State of Benevolent Institutions in or near Calcutta*, 1824, pp. 145–155; Long, *Introduction to Adam's Reports*, pp. 1-6; Long's *Handbook to the Bengal Missions*; W. H. Carey, *Orient. Christ. Biography*, vol iii, pp. 294-298. For John Harley, see W. H. Carey, *op. cit.*, p. 134 *et seq.*

scholars and obtained the patronage of Lord Hastings. Mr. May however was soon cut off by death but his colleagues Messrs. Harley and Pearson, who also belonged to the same society, succeeded in keeping up his work by the offer of their services. Robert May [1] compiled in 1817 an arithmetical table on the native model which was popularly known for a long time as *May-Ganita*.

John Harley or Harle. (d. 1822).

Harley supplemented May's work by his *Ganitānka* or গণিতাঙ্ক (Chinsurah, 1819) compiled on a mixed model.[2] Pearson's works however, were of greater value and effect than any of these. He was a very industrious and voluminous writer and it is difficult to draw up a complete list of his writings, of which the following seem to be the more important ones :—

John. D. Pearson. 1790-1831.

(1) পত্রকৌমুদী or Letters on Familiar Subjects containing 260 letters on domestic, commercial, and familiar subjects, zemindary accounts, and other forms in common use. 1819. 6th ed. in 1852. (Published by the School Book Society).

(2) পাঠশালার বিবরণ or Schoolmaster's Manual (Published by the School Book Society) 1819. Explains the Bell and Lancaster system.

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[1] On the epitaph over Robert May's remains are written the following words: "In his life he was especially engaged in promoting the best interests of the rising generation, by whom his name will long be held in endearing recollection." (*Bengal Obituary*, p. 298). গণিত (Gonito) or a Collection of Arithmetical Tables by R. May in Bengali, 8vo. Calcutta 1821. See *Catalogue E. I. Co's Library* (1845), p. 268.

[2] See also the works cited above in p 263 footnote [1]. Also see Carey, *Oriental Christian Biography*, vol. i, pp. 368–71. May's and Harley's Arithmetic were republished by the School Book Society.

(3) বাক্যাবলী or Idiomatical Exercises. English and Bengalee, with dialogues, letters, etc., on various subjects. Calcutta 1820. A phrase-book and vocabulary. Published by the School Book Society. (Ed. Cal. 1829.)

(4) নীতিকথা or Moral Tales composed jointly with Rājā Rādhākānta Deb for the School Book Society. Before 1821.

(5) Translation of Murray's English Grammar, 1820. [Mentioned also in *Catalogue E. I. Company's Library* (p. 267) as "Grammar of the English Language, English and Bengalee, Calcutta 1820"].

(6) প্রাচীন ইতিহাসের সমুচ্চয় or an Epitome of Ancient History, English and Bengalee, containing a concise account of the Egyptians, Assyrians, Persians, Grecians and Romans. The English compiled by Pearson: the Bengali version by Pearson and others. Calcutta 1830. pp. 1-623. (A previous edition containing only 364 pages with the accounts of the Egyptians, Assyrians, Babylonians, Medes, Persians and the Grecians).

(7) ভূগোল ও জ্যোতিষ ইত্যাদি বিষয়ক কথোপকথন, English and Bengali. 1st ed. 1824. 2nd ed. Calcutta 1827.

(8) দুই মহা আজ্ঞা or the Two Great Commandments being an exposition of St. Matthew xxii. 37. Calcutta 1826.

(9) We find the following entry in Murdoch, *Catalogue*: "Pilgrim's Progress. Bengali and English by Rev. J. D. Pearson, chiefly from the Serampore Edition, 1834. 2nd Ed. Bengali alone. An Edition published by J. Wenger in 1853."[1]

(10) In the *Catalogue of E. I. Company's Library* (1845), p. 267, mention is made of "A School Dictionary, English and Bengali. 12mo. Calcutta 1829.

[1] See also W. H. Carey, *Oriental Christian Biography*, vol. i. p. 370, for a list of Pearson's works.

James Keith. 1784-1822.

Of Rev. James Keith, who came out to India in 1816 and belonged to the London Mission at Calcutta, it is said that "during his short career, in conjunction with Rev. H. Townly[1] he laid the foundation of a mission in the metropolis of India."[2] His chief works, educational or biblical are (*i*) এক জন দরোয়ান ও মালী এই উভয়ের কথোপকথন or a Dialogue between a porter and a gardener. A Christian tract. 2nd ed., pp. 1-19. Serampore 1820? 3rd ed. considerably modified., pp. 1-20. Calcutta 1135? (ii) বালকেরদিগের শিক্ষার্থে স্পষ্ট প্রশ্নোত্তর ধারাতে বঙ্গভাষার ব্যাকরণ or a Grammar of the Bengalee language adapted to the young in easy questions and answers. Calcutta 1825, pp. 1-68. 3rd ed. Calcutta 1839. Published by the School Book Society.[3]

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[1] Henry Townly was also a tract-writer in Bengali, Among his works may be mentioned (1) কোন শাস্ত্র মাননীয় or What Scriptures should be regarded, a Christian tract in the form of a dialogue between a Christian and a Hindu. Serampore, 1820? (Ed. C. C. T. and B. S. 1836). pp. 1-12. (2) একজন পণ্ডিতের সহিত একজন সরকারের কথোপকথন। 2nd ed., pp. 1-16. (C. C. T. and B. S.)

[2] See *Bengal Obituary*, pp. 67-68. *Asiatic Journal*, 1817, vol. iii, p. 500.

[3] Dinesh Ch. Sen (*History*, p. 870) erroneously styles the author as Keat and his Grammar as Ket-Vyakaran. The date given by him is 1820. It seems the book was not available to him when he wrote this account: for otherwise this mistake is absurd. In *Catalogue of E. I. Co.'s Library*, mention is also made of Nitikotha or Fables in Bengali by J. Keith. Calcutta 1828. A specimen of the method and style of the Grammar is given below :—

Interjections or আক্ষেপোক্তি বিষয়।

১ প্রঃ। আক্ষেপোক্তিতে কি বুঝা যায়.

উত্তর। তাহাতে বক্তার শক্ত প্রমাণ বুঝা যায়; যথা আঃ কি দুঃখ। উঃ কি জ্বালা। ইঃ কি বেদনা।

ওগো ওরে ওহে, আরে এরে ওলো এই সকল আক্ষেপোক্তি দূরস্থ ব্যক্তির পূর্ব্বে উক্ত হয় যথা ওগো বাবা ওরে রামহরি।

Other minor European writers

It is not worth while to linger long over the names of other minor missionary or non-missionary writers who wrote religious tracts and educational text-books; for to give an exhaustive account of their names and writings would be to enumerate a Homeric catalogue.[1] We may, however, mention in passing the names of Herklotts,[2] Sutherland[3] and Sandys[4] who wrote chiefly on Geography; of Kempbell[5] and Kneane[6] whose contributions were mostly historical; of Mundy,[7] Rouse,[8] Hoeberlin[9] and Townly[10] who were religious controversialists; of

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গো, হে, রে, লো, এই সকল আক্ষেপোক্তি বর্ত্তমান ব্যক্তির অগ্রে উক্ত হয়। যথা পিতা গো, হরি হে, মুটিয়া রে, ছুড়ি লো। (p. 41). It is curious to note such expressions occurring as আমি করা ছিয়াছি (p. 35), আমি করা গেলাম (p. 62).

[1] The activity of the Calcutta School Book and of School Society as well as the writings of authors like the Rev. K. M. Banerji is not treated here, because, properly speaking, they belong to a subsidiary movement in literature which came into relief a decade later than the movement inaugurated by the missionaries of Śrīrāmpur or the Pundits of Fort William College.

[2] A Map of the World in Bengali by Rev. Gregory Herklotts of Chinsurah. 1824.

[3] Geography of India by J. Sutherland.

[4] General Geography in Bengali by Sandys, 1842.

[5] Tucker's History of the Jews translated into Bengali, 1843. pp. 1-257.

[6] Pārasika Itihās.

[7] বাইবেল প্রকাশিত ধর্ম্মের সহিত হিন্দুলোকদিগের শাস্ত্রোক্ত ধর্ম্মের তুলনা বিষয়ক পুস্তক or Christianity and Hinduism (2 pts pp. 1-230. Cal. 1828) by George Mundy. G. Mundy was attached to C. M. S. at Chinsurah, latterly a pastor of the Coolie Bazar Chapel. d. 1853.

[8] Rouse revised the Bengali Bible (1807). He wrote many tracts of which may be mentioned খ্রীষ্টিয় শিক্ষাবিষয়ক উপদেশমালা or Plain Sermons on Christian Doctrine, pp. 1-148. 1881.

[9] ধর্ম্ম পুস্তকের বৃত্তান্ত or Bible Stories translated from the German of Dr. Christian Gottlieb Barth by Mr. Hoeberlin. With 27 illustrations. pp. 1-252. 1846.

[10] See p. 266 footnote.

Miller,[1] Mendies[2] and Rozario[3] who were lexicographers; of Yule,[4] Weitbrecht,[5] Rodt[6] and Bomwetsch[7] who composed easy reading lessons for children in schools. We may similarly pass over the names of William Morton,[8] a miscellaneous tract and text-book writer; of David Carmichael Smyth,[9] author of a treatise

[1] Bengali Dictionary 1801 (Long and *Biśvacoṣ*). A copy without title-page in Sāhitya Pariṣat Library.

[2] An abridgement of Johnson's Dictionary in English and Bengali, calculated for the use of Native as well as European students to which is subjoined a short list of French and Latin words and phrases in common use among English authors (Serampore Mission Press. 1822) by John Mendies. To Vol. II. is appended an Introduction to Bengali Language. Serampore 1828.

[3] Bengali Dictionary, 1837.

[4] শিশু বোধোদয় or Spelling Book with short sentences and verses.

[5] শিশু শিক্ষা or Object Lessons, 1852.

[6] (*a*) জ্ঞান কিরণোদয়ঃ অর্থাৎ বালকবৃন্দের বোধবিধায়ক বিদ্যাবিষয়ক বিরচিত বৃত্তান্ত। pp. 1-92. Calcutta 1843. (*b*) জ্ঞানারুণোদয়ঃ অর্থাৎ বালক শিক্ষার্থে বঙ্গভাষায় বর্ণমালা। pp. 1-46. Calcutta 1841. (*c*) মুক্তিমিমাংসা। a Christian tract (see *Bengal Obituary*, p. 68). Rev. Randolph de Rodt (1814-1843) was attached to the London Missionary Society. Came out to India April 11, 1826. (See Carey, *Oriental Christian Biography*, p. 180.)

[7] ১ম পাঠ। or Thirty Reading Lessons for the use of Children in Bengali Christian Schools (pp. 1-61. Calcutta ? 1855 ?) by Rev. Chistian Bomwetsch.

[8] (*a*) Proverbs of Solomon translated. 1843. (*b*) Biblical and Theological Vocabulary, English and Bengali compiled, by William Morton and others, pp. 1-31. Calcutta 1845. (*c*) দৃষ্টান্ত বাক্য সংগ্রহ or a Collection of Proverbs, Bengali and Sanscrit, with their translation and application in English, pp. 1-160. Calcutta 1832. (*d*) Dictionary of the Bengali Language, with Bengali Synonyms and English interpretation. Calcutta 1828. (*e*) তথ্যপ্রকাশ অথ বজ্রসূচী or a Treatise on Idol worship and other Hindu observances by Vrajamohon Deb followed by translation from Vajrasuchi of Ashwagosha, pp. 60, 14. Calcutta, 1842, by William Morton. (Ed. in 1843).

[9] জমিদারীব হিসাব or Original Bengalese Zumeendaree Account accompanied by a translation into English, pp. 1-401. Calcutta 1823. Smyth died in 1841. See *Bengal Obituary*.

on zemindary accounts; of George Galloway[1] who translated Gladwin's Pleasant Stories; of Captain Stewart[2] the founder of the Burdwan Church Mission; and of Dr. Hans Heinrich Eduard Roer[3] who rendered into Bengali some of Lamb's Tales from Shakespeare. The name of Sir Graves Champney Haughton, the great scholar and orientalist, will detain us for a moment and with this last, though not the least important name, we close our chapter on the European writers in Bengali.

Sir Graves Champney Haughton, son of John Haughton, a Dublin physician, was born in 1788. He was educated in England and having obtained a military cadetship on the Bengal Establishment of East India Company, he proceeded to India in 1808. In 1812 he joined the Fort William College where he received seven medals, three degrees of honour, and various pecuniary rewards for his proficiency in Arabic, Persian, Hindusthani, Sanscrit and

Sir Graves Champney Haughton. (1788-1849.)

[1] মনোহর ইতিহাসমালা or Pleasant Stories of Gladwin's Persian Moonshee translated from the original Persian and English into the Bengalee language. Calcutta, printed by D'Rozario & Co., 1840

[2] (*a*) উপদেশ কথা (ইতিহাসের সুবচন) পরন্তু ইংলণ্ডীয়োপাখ্যানের চুম্বক। or Moral Tales of History with an historical sketch of England and her connexion with India, etc. (containing selections from L. M. Stretch's Beauties of History), pp 1-68. Calcutta 1820 Dated wrongly in *Bruces* as appearing in 1819 and entitled ঐতিহাসিক নীতিপুর. Dinesh Chandra Sen, *History* (pp 869 and 870) enters the book twice as Upadesha Katha and Moral Tales of History without identifying them (*b*) তিমির নাশক or the Destroyer of Darkness: a Christian Tract, pp 1-20. Published by the Calcutta Christian Tract and Book Society; 1835. For Stewart and Weitbrecht, see *District Gazetteer*, vol. on Burdwan in the Chap on Education. Also see Long's *Introduction* to Adam's *Reports*; Lushington, *History, etc., of Religious and Benevolent Institutions in and near Calcutta*, pp. 145-155

[3] মহাকবি সেক্ষপীয়র প্রণীত নাটকের মর্ম্মানুরূপ লেম্বস টেলের কতিপয় আখ্যায়িকা or Lamb's Tales from Shakespeare, translated by E Roer, pp. 1-21. Calcutta. 1853. (Bengal Family Library Series.)

Bengali. In 1815 his ill-health compelled him to leave for England. In 1817 he was appointed Professor of Oriental Languages at Haileybury where he continued till 1827.[1] Haughton took great interest in the foundation of the Royal Society in London of which he was an oriental member and honorary secretary from 1831 to 1833. He died of cholera at St. Cloud, near Paris, on August 28, 1849.[2]

Haughton was more of a scholar than a littérateur and his works in Bengali have a philological rather than a purely literary interest. His works, chiefly useful compilations, consisted of (1) *Rudiments of Bengalee Grammar* (in English). London 1821, pp. 1-168. It was composed by order of the Court of Directors and was based mainly on the works of Halhed and Carey. (2) *Bengalee Selections* (from Chaṇḍīcharaṇ's translation of Totā Itihās, from Mṛtyuñjay's Bengali version of Hindi Siṁhāsana Battisi, and from Haraprasād Rāy's translation of Bidyāpati's Sanscrit Puruṣ-parīkṣā with translation into English and a vocabulary. pp. 1-198. London. 1822. Edition by D. Forbes, London, 1869. (3) *Glossary,* Bengali and English, to explain the Totā Itihāsa, the Batriś Simhāsan, the History of Rājā Kṛṣṇa Chandra, the Puruṣ Parīkṣā, and the Hitopadeś. pp. 1-124. London. 1825. (4) *A Bengalee-English Dictionary* compiled by order of the Court of Directors. London. 1833. These useful works, once held in great esteem, are still valuable, but it is rather the Bengali language than Bengali literature which owes its debt of gratitude to Haughton.

[1] *Royal Kalendar*, 1818, p. 293 ; *ibid*, 1820, p. 282.

[2] For further informations, see *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1833, pt ii, p. 76 ; biographical notice in *ibid*, 1849, pt. ii, p. 420 ; Annual Rept. of the Royal Asiatic Soc. for May 1850 in vol. xiii of *Journal*, pp. ii-v ; Wilson's *Dublin Directory*, 1790, p. 121 ; *Alumni Oxonienses*, 1715-1886. ii, 626 ; Allibone's *Dict. of British and American Authors*, 1872, vol. i.

CHAPTER IX

General Characteristics

We have now closed the survey of a period of 19th century literature in Bengal, which is covered principally by European writers and their colleagues and which, if not the greatest, is at least one of the most important in its literary history: for although not rich in positive accomplishment, this and the period of transition which followed it, had been the great school-time of modern literature, periods in which the unconscious experiments of Carey and his colleagues were made, expanded, and multiplied, sometimes with the conscious purpose of developing a prose *style* and always with the practical effect of doing so, by writers in the widely diverging branches of literature. No other period demonstrates so conclusively the folly or fallacy of the theory already alluded to, which would bid us ignore historic estimates and look only to "the best things" in literature. Of such "best things" this period has got very little to show; its productions, with the greatest stretch of literary charity, can hardly be said to touch even the fringe of literature proper. To appreciate, much less to enjoy, the rudimentary publications of this period would require a certain amount of patience and catholicism, if not a kind of pre-established harmony of taste, in the reader; yet the importance of this period is not to be underrated on that account. There is no other portion of our modern literature

General remarks on the characteristics of the European writers and their achievement.

Importance of this period in literary history.

the study of which can be ignored with greater danger, none the study of which is repaid by a fuller understanding, in regard to the rest. Although it was a stage necessarily unproductive, it was yet the great period of germination, and an acquaintance with it is helpful for the understanding and enjoyment of the rich harvest which our literature had subsequently borne within the last half of the century.

With the old caution about the constant overlapping of tendencies, it would not be wrong to state that this was chiefly a period of European activity in Bengali literature. It is true indeed that there was a strong and unmastered counter-current of native energy which expressed itself in the songs of the Kabiwalas and other products of purely native genius, not the least affected by the new spirit, and that in an historical survey of the literary achievements of this period we cannot very well ignore the significance of these forms of indigenous literature; yet when we consider the Europeanised tendency of modern Bengali literature, its new literary method and new mode of expression, we cannot but give a greater prominence to European activity and spread of European ideas. The older traditions still continued to live on, and an antagonism between the old and the new spirit is traceable throughout the literary history of the 19th century; for the mental progress of a nation cannot prove itself altogether independent of the fatality of hereditary transmission. But we give greater importance to the Europeans because it is the spirit of their work, aided no doubt by the inexorable hand of circumstances, which was to dominate in the end and determine

A period of European activity.

Counter-currents of native energy, how related to it.

the final bent of modern literature. In spite of the natural persistence of old methods and old forms, access was obtained to new methods and new forms, and the tide of literary fashion began to flow in other and more novel directions with the advent of European writers and European ideas in the field.

Its transitional character and the changes it brought about.

The description which suggests itself for the quarter of a century from 1800 to 1825 is that of the early or first Transition Period; for it marks the first great advance from the old to the new, although another period of progress was necessary to bring about in its fulness the dawn of modern literary Bengali. The changes of the period are many and far-reaching and everywhere transitional in character. In politics and social affairs, the conflict between the old and the new was gradually taking shape and there was unrest and uncertainty everywhere consequent upon such conflict. In linguistic matters, we find not only profit and loss in details of vocabulary but also an innovation in the direction of a simpler syntax. But in literature, although the ancient trend of thought and feeling was to some extent being continued in the popular Kabi-songs and other indigenous forms of literature, the British contact did not fail to bring about changes of the gravest kind, in relation to its material, its form, and its literary temper. The field of literary adventures was enlarged and since the tentative efforts resulting from these innovations took, for the most part, the form of their models, radical changes in literary form became palpable. The changes in the literary temper were so subtle and varied that no summary description would be adequate but that it was marked by a greater desire for individual liberty. The age became more and more articulate and forthwith res-

ponded to contemporary influences. The old schools were being upset and the representative character of the old literature which was becoming more and more urbane and and artificially limited to a select few, who could appreciate its new ideas and novel forms, was lost in the attempt, mostly by untrained hands, to imitate foreign literary methods and models.

Leaving aside the indigenous forms of literature for separate treatment, the first portion of this period (1800-1815), which was indeed a stage of timid experiment, was for the most part a period of European authorship, varied by occasional imitations by scarcely original native authors, the chief centre of literary publication being the Fort William College. We have traced at some length the connexion of this college with the history and growth of Bengali literature in the early years of British settlement ; and its importance cannot be gainsaid. It was here indeed that modern Bengali literature, especially Bengali prose, received its first exercising ground and without its co-operation it is doubtful whether even the Śrīrāmpur Mission, an institution equally important to Bengali literature, could have achieved the remarkable success which it actually did. The two institutions, the Fort William College and the Śrīrāmpur Mission, founded at the same time yet so dissimilar to each other in their aim and object, found themselves connected with each other by at least one bond of close kinship, namely, the encouragement which both afforded to the study of Bengali. We shall realise how close this relationship was when we bear in mind that almost all the publications of the College were printed at the Śrīrāmpur Press and that, on the other hand, it was the Mission which sup-

The College of Fort William

and the Śrīrāmpur Mission.

plied the College with scholars and professors of Bengali. In this respect, each supplemented the work of the other. Indeed before the missionaries came in contact with the College of Fort William through the appointment of Carey as Professor of Bengali, their work in the field of Bengali prose had been very slight. In the meantime they had only succeeded in translating and printing off the Bengali Bible but in this again they had rendered only a doubtful service to Bengali prose. The Mission was too poor and too insignificant to undertake extensive literary work of a permanent kind ; and on political and other grounds the missionaries had all along been held in disfavour. The first political recognition of the Mission and its worthy object with reference to the study of Bengali came with the appointment of Dr. Carey as Professor in Lord Wellesley's newly established College. Under the patronage, pecuniary and otherwise, of the College, a fresh impetus was given to the study of Bengali. But even then the stringent regulations which had fettered the press in India and other political restrictions stood in the way of intellectual progress and it was not until another decade or so had passed that a more liberal and far-sighted policy was adopted. It may also be noted here that the benefit rendered to Bengali by all these early institutions was never direct but came indirectly and therefore with occasional fluctuations through their encouragement of the study of the language itself on political and other utilitarian grounds.

Government encouragement.

This European patronage, however, was attended with both loss and gain to Bengali Literature. It is dangerous to dogmatise about influences but it cannot be denied that, speaking generally, it was the intellectual

European patronage ; its effects

stimulus given by the British contact which raised Bengali Literature out of the slough of general decadence into which it had been plunged after the death of Bhāratchandra. The vernacular was raised if not above, at least on the same level with, the classical languages, which had hitherto held the undisputed sway. But the literature of Bengal, which had hitherto belonged to the people in general, shifted its centre of activity from the peaceful village-homes to the crowded cities and the metropolis, and under the patronage of an alien lettered class, imbued with new ideas and novel methods, it lost its representative character, its primitive colouring, and its pristine simplicity. It is true that the literary spirit of the people, even though arrested temporarily, never died out and that the last echoes of the great Baiṣṇab and Śākta writers still lingered faintly in their less worthy successors, the *Kabiwalas*, the *Yātrākars*, the *Kathakas* or the *Pāñchālikars*, through whom they have coloured even our modern ways of thought; yet when the literature revived, with the creation of a new lettered class and a new public, it revived "with a difference."

Stimulating influence of British contact.

But the literature losing its primitive colouring.

It will be seen, however, that this era of Bengali literature is essentially an era of prose and one of its greatest achievements is indeed the creation of modern prose-of-all-work. The prose of the first decade of the century, however, that we are passing in review, has little or nothing delectable to a mere literary taster, but to the critical student it possesses great interest and importance. For this was indeed the beginning of Bengali prose properly so called; for before 1800, it may

An era of prose; its formal importance.

be doubted whether, in spite of the large number of old philosophical and religious prose-works now discovered, there is a single Bengali prose work of any importance, which unites the bulk and literary quality of a book proper. It is true indeed that the prose of the early 19th century (chiefly tentative in character) is comparatively clumsy, inartistic, but its formal importance in literary history can never be denied, and even within this shapeless mass, there is a full pulse of life that may be detected by any careful reader who does not associate old book with mummies. But in order to appreciate this importance, we must at the outset obtain some idea of the conditions under which it came about and developed so rapidly within a few years.

The conditions under which modern Bengali prose came into being and its subjection to conflicting influences with the disappearance of the old school.

Modern Bengali prose, like modern Bengal itself, came into being under anomalous conditions. After the death of Bhārat-chandra and with the disappearance of the great Baiṣṇab and Śākta writers the literature of Bengal was left to shift for itself, uncontrolled by the power of any individual native genius, which alone, by "dwelling apart" in an age of conflicting influences, could have helped to guide it. The European writers, who took the lead in the matter at the beginning of the 19th century had little experience of Bengal and much less of Bengali literature: in matters of composition, they took as their guide, not the ancient writers of Bengal, who were by this time hopelessly entombed in a mass of old inaccessible manuscripts, but the great Bhaṭṭāchāryas or *Ṭol* pundits who, on account of their classical accomplishments, were thought fit to write in the vernacular tongue.

(1) The *Bhaṭṭāchāryas*; their language (পণ্ডিতী ভাষা).

But these learned pundits, who traded upon the general ignorance of the people and treated the vernacular with contempt, knew nothing of our past literature, but with a confidence born of untraining and in their eagerness to display their classical learning, they affected a pedantic sanscritised style which was more than what the language could bear. Their very erudition proved their greatest disqualification; and their unwieldy style and its uncouth form, betraying all the absurd defects of an untrained hand, were wholly out of accord with the genius of the language. To handle these matters properly there is needed a poise so perfect that the least overweight in any direction tends to destroy the balance. The Duke of Wellington said of a certain peer that "it was a great pity his education had been so far too much for his abilities." In like manner, one often sees the erudition of these pundits prove too much for their abilities. In justice to these learned pundits, however, it must be said that some of them honestly believed in the efficacy of the sanscritised style, which was supposed to add dignity to the flat and colourless vernacular and that if they did not write easily, they wrote correctly: only this partiality for Sanscrit or use of সাধুভাষা (high style) was often carried to the extreme. We have seen how the learned author of *Prabodh-chandrikā* at the beginning of his work extols Sanscrit as the best of all languages[1]; but he prefers to write in Bengali inasmuch as it is the best of the vernaculars on account of the preponderance of Sanscrit in it (অন্যান্য দেশীয় ভাষা হইতে গৌড়দেশীয় ভাষা উত্তমা সর্ব্বোত্তমা সংস্কৃতভাষাবাহুল্য

Their classical learning and pedantry; and total ignorance of the vernacular literature.

Partiality for Sanscrit and absurdly sanscritised style.

[1] See extract quoted at p. 218.

হেতুক). This may be taken fairly as the opinion of the Bhaṭṭāchāryas generally who now made it their province to patronise Bengali. In Bk. II, Chap. I of the same work again, Mṛtyuñjay, while discoursing on the beauties and defects of prose style, quotes and analyses the following sentences as exhibiting various rhetorical qualities—" ইন্দুতে ইন্দীবরসুন্দর চিহ্ন চারু ছবি বিস্তার করে। কামিনী কাঞ্চী মঞ্জীর মঞ্জু সিঞ্জিত করে (প্রসাদগুণ)। নীলোৎপল ক্রীড়াসরোরুহ হেমাঙ্গদ পীনপয়োধর সুধাংশুমুখী মদঘূর্ণীত-লোচনা মদনমদালসবিলাসিনী স্তনভরনমিতাঙ্গী গুরুনিতম্বভারমন্থরা মলয়নন্দনগন্ধবাহ কোকিলকল কূজিত বসন্তকুসুমামোদসুরভীকৃত দিঙ্‌মুখ (উদারগুণ)। অস্তপর্ব্বত মস্তকপর্য্যন্ত পর্য্যন্ত সূর্য্যারুণবর্ণ কিরণরূপ বসনা যে বারুণী দিক্ সে পীনস্তনস্থলস্থিত নির্ম্মলতাম্রকম্রবস্ত্রা তরুণীর তুল্য শোভা পাইতেছে (ওজঃগুণ)। কোকিলকুলকলালাপবাচাল যে মলয়ানিল সে উচ্ছলচ্ছীকরাত্যচ্ছ নির্ঝরাম্বুঃকণাচ্ছন্ন হইয়া আসিতেছে (সাম্যগুণ)। (প্রবোধচন্দ্রিকা, দ্বিতীয় স্তবক, প্রথম কুসুম)।

Specimen of the kind of style they favoured.

These examples would clearly indicate the kind of style which was highly favoured and the length to which this sanscritisation was carried.[1]

But long before the Bhaṭṭāchāryas affected this stiff, laboured and pedantic diction, another style of expression, chiefly favoured by the court-going or commercial *Kāyasthas*, was already extensively prevalent and sometimes found its way into the more serious compositions of the time. It was a kind of half-Bengali and half-Persian diction which was

(2) The *Kāyasthas*; their language (আদালতী ভাষা).

[1] Of these pundits, Mṛtyuñjay, though he affected an artificially correct and learned diction, was fully alive to the sense of style and knew the value of appropriate phrasing. In one place, he writes in

the language of the court and the market-place and of which we have seen a subdued specimen in the style of *Pratāpāditya Charitra*. Ever since the time of Mohammedan conquest, Persian words and expressions or their modified Urdu forms [1] were gradually finding their way into the Bengali vocabulary, and the necessity of their being used, more or less, in everyday conversation, no doubt facilitated the process. By the time the *Chaṇḍī* of Kabikaṅkaṇ was composed Persian was already extensively used even in the verse-compositions of the period. The following quotation, in which in nine verses more than eighteen Persian words will be found, will show in how short a time Bengali put on a novel aspect through its admixture with Persian.

Persian element; its long history in Bengali literature.

Chaṇḍī of Kabikaṅkaṇ.

সহর সিলিমাবাজ তাহাতে সজ্জনরাজ
নিবসে নিয়োগী গোপীনাথ।
তাঁহার তালুকে বসি দামিন্যায় চাষ চষি
নিবাস পুরুষ ছয় সাত॥

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his quaint way: শাস্ত্রে বাক্যকে গো শব্দে যে কহিয়াছেন তাহার কারণ এই ভাষা যদি সম্যকরূপে প্রয়োগ করা যায় তবে স্বয়ং কামদুঘাধেনু হন যদি দুষ্টরূপে প্রয়োগ করা যায় তবে সেই দুষ্ট ভাষা স্বনিষ্ঠগোত্বধর্ম্মকে স্বপ্রয়োগকর্ত্তাতে অর্পণ করিয়া স্ববক্তাকে গোরূপে পণ্ডিতেরদের নিকটে বিখ্যাত করেন।.....আর বাক্য কহা বড় কঠিন সকলহইতে কহা যায় না কেন না কেহ বাক্যেতে হাতি পায় কেহ বা বাক্যেতে হাতির পায়। অতএব বাক্যেতে অত্যল্প দোষও কোন প্রকারে উপেক্ষনীয় নহে কেন না যদ্যপি অতিবড় সুন্দরও শরীর হয় তথাপি যৎকিঞ্চিৎ একশিত্র রোগ দোষেতে নিন্দনীয় হয় (প্রবোধ চন্দ্রিকা, প্রথম স্তবক, চতুর্থ কুসুম, পৃঃ ২৪)।

[1] A pretty good but by no means exhaustive list of Arabic and Persian words used in Bengali will be found in *Sāhitya Pariṣat Patrikā*, vol. viii, also vol. xii.

ধন্য রাজা মানসিংহ বিষ্ণুপদে যেবা ভৃঙ্গ
গৌড়-বঙ্গ-উৎকল-মহীপ।
অধর্ম্মী রাজার কালে প্রজার পাপের ফলে
খিলাৎ পায় মামুদ সরিপ॥
উজীর হইলা রায়জাদা ব্যাপারীরে দেয় খেদা
ব্রাহ্মণ বৈষ্ণবে হলো অরি।
মাপে কোণে দিয়া দড়া পোনের কাঠায় কুড়া
নাহি শুনে প্রজার গোহারি॥
সরকার হইলা কাল খিল ভুমি লেখে লাল
বিনা উপকারে খায় ধুতি।
পোদ্দার হইল যম টাকা আড়াই আনা কম
পাই লভ্য লয় দিন প্রতি॥
ডিহিদার অবোধ খোজ কড়ি দিলে নাহি রোজ
ধান্য গোরু কেহ নাহি কেনে।
প্রভু গোপীনাথ নন্দী বিপাকে হইলা বন্দী
হেতু কিছু নাহি পরিত্রাণে॥
কোতোলিয়া বড় পাপ সজ্জনের কাল সাপ
কড়ির কারণে বহু মারে।
আথালি পাথালি কড়ি লেখাজোখা নাহি দেড়ি
যত দিয়া যেবা নিতে পারে॥
জমাদার বসায় কাছে প্রজারা পালায় পাছে
তুয়াব জুড়িয়া দেয় থানা।
প্রজার ব্যাকুল চিত্ত বেচে ধান্য গোরু নিত্য
টাকার দ্রব্য হয় দশ আনা॥
সহায় শ্রীমন্ত খাঁ চণ্ডীবাটী যার গাঁ
যুক্তি করি গম্ভীর খাঁর সনে।
দামিন্যা ছাড়িয়া যাই সঙ্গে রমানাথ ভাই
পথে চণ্ডী দিলা দরশনে॥ [1]

[1] *Kabikankan Chandi*. ed. by Akshay Kumar Sarkar in *Prāchīn Kabisamgraha*, pt. ii. p. 5. Slightly different readings are given in Bangabāsī edition, pp. 6-7.

This lengthy extract is quoted not only to show the preponderance of Persian words and forms but it will also be noticed from the descriptions contained here that Bengal, then divided into Tāluks, was governed by officers like *Vizir, Koṭāl, Sarkār, Dihidār, Jamādār*, etc. ; that Hindu cities or villages have already taken Mohammedan names ; that people are getting *khelāts* as a sign of royal favour ; that men like Śrīmanta or Gambhīra had been adorned with Mohammedan titles of distinction ; and that, on the whole, Mohammedan ideas and customs had penetrated into the very fabric of native society. It is not surprising therefore that in the age of Rājā Kṛṣṇachandra, Bhārat-chandra Rāy, himself a man of sound culture possessing considerable knowledge of Sanscrit, could not escape the fascination of a mixed language and the influence of Persian ideas.[1] We find him saying, therefore, while describing a conversation between Emperor Jahāngīr and Rājā Mānasiṁha—

Mohammedan Bengal.

Bhārat-chandra.

মানসিংহ পাতসার হইল যে বাণী
উচিত সে পারশী আরবী হিন্দুস্থানী ॥
পড়িয়াছি যেই মত বর্ণিবারে পারি
কিন্তু সে সকল লোক বুঝিবারে ভারি ॥
না রবে প্রসাদগুণ না হবে রসাল
অতএব কহি ভাষা যবনী মিশাল ॥

It is not unusual therefore that writing in 1778, Halhed in the Preface to his *Grammar* says : "At present those persons are thought to speak this compound idiom (Bengali) with the greatest elegance who mix with pure Indian verbs

Halhed's remarks.

[1] It is well-known, for instance, that much of the famous description of his heroine's beauty is derived from Persian sources.

the greatest number of Persian and Arabic nouns." It is in the court-language, however, which still favours a preponderance of effete Persian forms, that the largest percentage of Persian words are to be found; and the following extract of a petition, given in an appendix to Halhed's *Grammar*, will show how the persianisa ion was carried even to a far greater length than was ever done by the authors of *Pratāpāditya Charitra* or *Totā Itihās*—

Specimen of the court-language.

শ্রীরাম। গরিব নেওাজ শেলামত। আমার জমিদারি পরগণে কাকজোল তাহার দুই গ্রাম দরিয়া শীকিস্তি হইয়াছে সেই দুই গ্রাম পয়স্তী হইয়াছে চাকালে একববরপুরের শ্রীহরেকৃষ্ট চৌধুরি আজ রায় জবরদস্তী দখল করিয়া ভোগ করিতেছে। আমি মালগুজারির শরবরাহতে মারা পড়িতেছি উমেদওয়ার জে শরকার হইতে আমি ও এক চোপদার শরজমিনেতে পহুচিয়া তোরফেনকে তলব দিয়া আদালত করিয়া হক দেলাইয়া দেন। ইতি সন ১১৮৫ তারিখ ১১ শ্রাবণ। ফিদবি জগতধির রায়।

It will be noticed, however, that about this time a reaction was setting in in favour of the use of Bengali, and the lengthy prefaces to Forster's *Vocabulary* as well as to Halhed's *Grammar*, which detail at some length the arguments in favour of the study of Bengali, bear witness to this reversion of popular feeling. Bengali, at this time, officially as well as popularly, was an unrecognised vernacular, and both Halhed and Forster rightly insist upon the absurdity and inconvenience of continuing the use of Persian in courts of law. Colebrooke[1] pays a high eulogy to Halhed and Forster for having

Discontinuance of Persian in law-courts.

[1] *Asiatic Researches*, vol. vii, 1799, p. 224.

brought the scientific study of Bengali within easy reach, but to them also as well as to other later writers, both native and foreign, belongs the credit of making Bengali not only the official language of the Presidency but also the basis of one of the most prolific literary languages of India.

(3) The common people; their language. (চলিত বা অপর ভাষা).

While the *tol* pundits and the court-scribes were attempting to bring Bengali under the lead of Sanscrit and Persian respectively, the language in the country-places, among "low men" and the people generally, was the unforbidden, if untaught, Bengali, which we find in the old writers and of which we find a distant echo in the outbursts of purely native inspiration like those of the *Kabiwalas*, *yātrākars*, *Kathakas*, and *Pāñchālikars*. A little sanscritised on the one hand and a little persianised on the other, the language preserved the equipoise perfectly and drew its nerve and vigour from the soil itself. It was so direct in its simplicity, so dignified in its colloquial ease, and so artful in its want of art that it never failed to appeal. Not a single latter-day writer, as the foremost among them himself acknowledges, has been able to speak in the same tongue. While speaking of this language of the people in its contrast to modern mixed literary diction, Bañkim Chandra lamented[1] "আজিকার দিনে অভিনব ও উন্নতির পথে সমারূঢ় সৌন্দর্য্যবিশিষ্ট বাঙ্গালা সাহিত্য দেখিয়া অনেক সময় বোধ হয়, হোক সুন্দর কিন্তু এ বুঝি পরের আমাদের নয়। খাঁটি বাঙ্গালা কথায় বাঙ্গালীর মনের ভাব ত খুঁজিয়া পাই না। তাই ঈশ্বরগুপ্তের কবিতা সংগ্রহে প্রবৃত্ত হইয়াছি।"

Kabiwalas and others.

Īśvar Gupta.

[1] ঈশ্বর গুপ্তের কবিতা সংগ্রহের মুখবন্ধ। (1895) Preface to the *Kabitā Saṁgraha* of Īśvar Chandra Gupta. Ed. by Bañkim Chandra Chatterjee and Gopāl Chandra Mukerjee in 2 pts.

Īśvar Gupta[1] whose tone and temper allied him with the Kabiwalas, was indeed the last of that blessed race over whom the confusion of Babel had not yet fallen.

It must not be supposed here that we are advocating purism in the matter of language or lamenting over the prevalence of Sanscrit, Persian or other influence. "Purism" to quote the words of a learned writer in the *Calcutta Review*[2] "is radically unsound and has its origin in a spirit of narrowness. In the free commingling of nations, there must be borrowing and giving. Can anything be more absurd than to think of keeping language pure when blood itself cannot be kept pure? No human language has ever been perfectly pure, any more than any human race has been pure. Infusion of foreign elements do, in the long run, enrich languages, just as infusion of foreign blood improves races." But in the beginning of the last century, the conflict of foreign elements under which Bengali prose came for a time proved a source of confusion to many a writer of the period. Lexicographers and grammarians like Halhed, Forster and Carey are eternally complaining, in their bewilderment, of the confusing variety and the exceedingly corrupt state of the vernacular due to its subjection to various foreign influence,[3] for the many political revolutions the country had sustained and its long communication with men of different religions, countries and manners

(4) The European writers.

[1] But here of course we are speaking of Īśvar Gupta's poetry and not his prose which perhaps exhibits the modern tendencies better than any other prose of the period.

[2] Śyāmā Charaṇ Gāṅguli, *Calcutta Review*, 1878

[3] See Halhed's and Forster's remarks quoted at pp. 86-7 and 92 *ante* respectively.

had impaired the simplicity of the vernacular and rendered it somewhat difficult for a foreigner. Not only did the pundits incorporate stiff and unfamiliar Sanscrit words and constructions and the Mohammedans various terms relating chiefly to business, law and government, the European nations too who settled here, never failed to influence the language and naturalise into it words of European origin. Of these, the Portuguese, before the British, have left behind them the largest traces in the country as well as in the language. The Portuguese extended their trade to Bengal a little before 1530 and after temporarily settling at Betaḍ (বেতড়) near Śibpur, and then at Saptagrām (Sātgāon) they finally colonised at "Golin" (near Bandel) at about 1537 or 1538.[1] In a short time, they became a formidable political power, and their wealth, daring roguery, and naval and military activity made them dreaded all over the country. About the end of the 16th century they settled at Barānagar near Calcutta and soon entered the Sunderbuns, gradually spreading over Eastern Bengal, where as pirates, adventurers, and extensive dealers in slave-trade, they soon obtained a dreaded reputation.[2] Their head-quarter in East Bengal was Chittagong, which, being more accessible by the sea, was called the Porto Grando; while

Their confusion at the diversity of the forms of the language.

The Portuguese element in Bengali.

[1] Stewart, *History of Bengal*, quoting (Ed. 1847, p. 1531) Faria Y Souza. Golin has been supposed to be the same as Ugolyn, a Portuguese form of Hugli.

[2] There is an allusion to their piracy and their use of হারামদ (Armada or War-ship) in the *Chaṇḍī* of Kabikaṅkaṇ—

ফিরাঙ্গির দেশখান বহে কর্ণধারে
রাত্রিতে বাহিয়া যায় হারামদ ডরে ॥

Hugli, their central colony in West Bengal, was named Porto Pequeno. Portuguese language came naturally with the Portuguese power and for about two centuries and a half even survived its extinction. "It was," to quote Marshman,[1] "the Lingua Franca of all foreign settlements around the Bay of Bengal and was the ordinary medium of conversation between the European and their domestics" even down to so late a period as 1828. It is easy to see that such ne'er-do-well adventurers as Portuguese pirates could hardly ever be expected to exert any properly literary influence, and their only point of contact with Bengali was through the medium of language.[2] They supplied its vocabulary with appellation of European arts and invention, names of many fruits, herbs, and trees (আনারস, etc.) which they had brought over from South America or elsewhere, certain terms of gambling (Primero প্রেমেরা, etc.) and even common everyday expressions like কেদারা, জানালা, ফিতা, গির্জ্জা, জোলাপ, আলমারি, আলপিন, বাল্‌তি, গামলা, প্রেক, চাবি, বরগা, etc. The common form of the oath "মাইরি" is even supposed to be a corrupt form of the name of the Virgin. It will be seen, however, that this Portuguese influence on Bengali was, on the whole, comparatively slight, and it never succeeded in changing the current mode of expression nor went beyond introducing certain fresh terms into its vocabulary.[3]

[1] *History of Serampore Mission*, vol. i, pp. 21-22.

[2] For an account of Portuguese influence and Portuguese element in Bengali, see *Sāhitya Parisat Patrikā*, vol. xviii, p. 45 *et seq.* where a good list of Portuguese words naturalised in Bengali will also be found. See also *Hobson-Jobson* ed. Yule and Burnell. J. A. Campos in his recent *History of the Portuguese in Bengal* (1919) has also given a list of Portuguese words in Bengali.

[3] The first Bengali Grammar and Dictionary was in Portuguese. See p. 75, *ante*

But the British influence on Bengali, owing to its permanent and all-embracing character, was more deep and far-reaching. In matters of language, however, the British writers at the outset, we have seen, found themselves in an embarrassed position. They did not know in the midst of perplexing diversity what models to choose or what form of the language to adopt. They however took primarily as their guide the compositions of their own munsis or pundits, which leaned towards pedantry and sanscritisation; but fortunately their strong commonsense, their literary instinct, and an innate tendency to realism,[1] which is a distinctive feature of all English writers, saved them from the contagion of affectation and made them adopt a more simple and natural style. Their language is a curious admixture of the sanscritised style of the pundits (সাধুভাষা) and the colloquial language of the people (চলিতভাষা) with some peculiarities of its own and a more or less decided leaning towards the latter. The missionaries and the schoolmasters, to whose rank and file belong most of the early European writers in Bengali, lived in the closest touch with the people, and their chief end in writing was not to show off their erudition but to make themselves intelligible, to be popular, clear and useful. There are, it is true, errors and excesses in their writing as vexatious as the stiffness of the Pundits, and the missionary Bengali has always been the sport of criticism. But, inspite of these and other aberrations, the general excellence of their style in one direction at least can

The language of the European writers (সাহেবী বা খৃষ্টানী বাঙ্গালা).

Its sources.

Its errors in vocabulary, syntax and idiom; but general excellence in its healthy direction towards simplicity and naturalness.

[1] See the remarks on Carey's *Dialogues* at p. 146.

never be disputed, namely, that its simplicity, precision, and directness presents a striking contrast to the sesquipedalian affectation of the Sanscrit pundits or the mixed jargon of the Persianised munsis. Carey and his co-adjutors brought to their task, that of translation and tract-writing, a combination of education and object. They were men all trained in the severe science of theological study: and they always strove to be exact and intelligible to the people. Their training compelled them to be precise and their object compelled them to be forcible. No better exercising ground for an infant prose, in at least some ways, could have been provided than the combined one of translation and polemic. The utilitarian end of these European writers, their realistic tendency, their position, influence and attainment directed the whole movement towards simplicity and naturalness, and it is well worthy of note that even some of the learned pundits of the Fort William College, through their example, did not despise to adopt occasionally the popular *patois* of the country.[1]

The training and object of these European writers.

Thus it will be seen that, at the beginning of the 19th century there were, roughly speaking, four different ways or modes of expression, struggling to gain ground and competing for mastery, namely পণ্ডিতী ভাষা, আদালতী ভাষা, চলিত ভাষা and সাহেবী বাঙ্গালা. Of these, the আদালতী ভাষা (court-language) in course of time, with the general disuse and discontinuance of Persian in law-courts, became almost extinct, and by 1836 we find but little trace of it, except in a few legal technical

The subsequent history of these four divergent styles

[1] See, for example, the story of বিশ্বরুক্ক in Mṛtyuñjay's *Prabodh-chandrikā*, দ্বিতীয় স্তবক, প্রথম কুসুম, part of which is quoted *ante* at pp. 221-222.

publications. The spoken idiom (চলিত ভাষা) favoured chiefly by the old school of writers like the Kabiwalas and used in country-places, never came into any direct prominence. The only two forms of style which stood in sharp antithesis to each other in the prose publications of the time and continued to play an important part in the literary history down to the fifties, were the learned style (পণ্ডিতী ভাষা), on the one hand, and the missionary style (সাহেবী বাঙ্গালা), on the other. The exclusive class of learned pundits still kept on in the traditional stiffness of their elaborate diction, while a host of new writers, who came into the field with the spread of English education[1] generally adopted the language of the missionaries in a purer and more modified form. The perpetually recurring struggle between the ornate and the plain styles [2] which plays an important part in the history of prose style in almost every literature, was for the first time definitely posed and worked out in Bengali prose in this period—the ornate style being favoured by the pundits and the plain style chiefly adopted by the missionary writers.

which comes to a head in a general opposition between the plain and the ornate styles.

The style of the pundits found a direct descendant in the *Sanscrit College style* of the fifties; while the *Ālālī style*, which betokened a contemporary reactionary movement, found its progenitor, through various intermediaries, primarily in the healthy movement towards simplicity and naturalness, first inaugurated by the Europeans,

This opposition becomes more well-defined in the antithesis of the *Ālālī* and the *Sanscrit College styles* of the fifties.

[1] Of whom the most prominent name is that of Rev. Kṛṣṇamohan Bandyopādhāy.

[2] See pp. 147, 219-20.

although secondarily it incorporated various elements from the language of the common people (চলিত ভাষা) and even from the persianised court-language (আদালতী ভাষা). Thus we see that this opposition between the plain and the ornate styles persistently dominated the history of Bengali prose for almost half a century and reached to a crisis in the two antithetical movements of the fifties—indicated by the *Ālālī style* and the *Sanscrit College style*—of which the genius of a writer like Baṅkimchandra alone could find a proper synthesis.

Synthesis in Baṅkimchandra.

It will be seen therefore that from the standpoint of literary history, the importance of this period in prose is hardly less than that of any other. But its productions, marked that they are by earliness and immaturity, have far less intrinsic merit. No historian of literature can claim anything like literary competency for much of this early prose, if he judges it by any strict literary standard. Originality is not a distinctive merit of this literature at all. Grammars, school-books, religious tracts, and other similar documents, most of them again mere translated pieces, cannot, in their very nature, justly claim to be called literature. In their translations again these writers are faithful enough : there is hardly any native aspiration to be free and original. Here and there, no doubt, they improved upon the capital that came into their hands but they seldom *created* or broke loose from their original. The style, again, is of the rudest character, abrupt, disconnected, obscure, and full of anacolutha, not only in the works of the missionaries whose command over the inherent resources of the language must have necessarily been limited and whose repute

Formal importance of this period; but its far less intrinsic merit.

Want of originality.

Chemistry and Medicine—everywhere we trace the indefatigable activity of the European writers. It is true that most of these works were meant merely to be text-books but they are equally significant of the zeal of their authors as writers and teachers and of the encouragement which was afforded to the cause of learning. The multiplication of Grammar and Dictionary, no doubt, points to a zealous movement towards the scientific study of the language, but it must be admitted that in the lexicons compiled by European writers, undue preponderance is given to Sanscrit words and the proportion of purely native Bengali words is comparatively small : while the Grammars, on the other-hand, are written mostly on the pattern of English Grammars and consequently fail to set in relief the peculiar features of the oriental vernacular. Little need be said of the works on History and Biography, Ethics and Moral Tales, for almost all these writings consist of mere translation : but a peculiar interest attaches, as we have seen, to the Bengali scientific writings of this period for their useful glossaries of technical and difficult terms as well as for their manner and method of rendering scientific ideas into Bengali. But, besides these contributions to the department of useful knowledge, there came about, under the European influence, a vogue for realism and social satire. The popular opinion has always leant to the supposition that in this sphere *Ālāl* and *Hutam* are the pioneer works, but even long before these works were published, from the time of Carey's *Dialogues* downwards, numerous works (such as Bhabāṇī-charaṇ's *Kalikātā Kamalālaya* or Pramathanāth Śarmā's

Grammar and Dictionary.

History, Biography, Ethics and Moral Tales.

Scientific writings.

Realism and social satire.

Naba Bābu Bilāsa) were published which served as models for *Ālāl* and *Hutam* and which had indeed reached a high degree of success and popularity. Another important field into which these Europeans directed the energy of Bengali writers is that of journalism. Thanks to the courage and zeal of its promoters, the difficult social and political conditions under which it was started never retarded its growth, and its long and interesting history bears witness to the enormous popularity and usefulness of this organ of popular opinion.

Journalism,

CHAPTER IX

Interregnum in Poetry from 1760.

The closing years of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th form a period of transition from old Bengali to modern Bengali literature; and in this period, as in every period of transition, while access was obtained to new ideas and new methods, the old traditions in literature still lived on. In the light of the Europeanised literature of to-day, prominence must be and has been given to European activity in Bengali Literature of this period, yet from the death of Bhārat-chandra in 1760 to the death of Īśvar Gupta in 1858, flourished a class of Bengali writers, chiefly poets, who were un-influenced by English ideas and who maintained, even with declining powers, the literary traditions of the past. Literary history, as a rule, is studded with such 'survivals' or 'relics,' if we may use these terms; but it is hardly correct to regard these outbursts of purely native inspiration as mere empty echoes of the past or flickering reactionary movements which the historian of literature may safely ignore. The tendencies of European or Europeanised writers may, in a sense, be described as exotic; but these inheritors of the literary traditions and instincts of the ancient race, on the other hand, were essentially national in sentiment and expression, and as such, represent, apart from all question of intrinsic excellence, a phase of literary development which we cannot very well pass over.

A body of indigenous literature

representing, in contrast to the writings of the Europeans, a distinct phase of literary development.

The literature of the first half of the 19th century is dominated in the main by two distinct tendencies; the one is fostered by European writers or by men tutored in European ideas and marked generally by the spirit of an intellectual aristocracy, while the other derives its strength from the essence of native genius, untouched by foreign ideas, and expresses itself chiefly in various forms of popular literature. The one, dressed in the new apparel of prose, goes forth to capture the gifts of the new knowledge, but the other, conveyed in the traditionary vehicle of verse, remains content with the spiritual inheritance of the past, diminished though it is with the lapse of time. The antagonism between these two tendencies, though it may not be very marked in later periods, lasts throughout the literary history of the 19th century; and in the literature of to-day, although the triumph of the new tendency is said to be fully proclaimed yet it remains to be considered how far this triumph has been or may be achieved without making legitimate concessions to the demands of the opposing tendency. Till the death of Īśvar Gupta, in whom we find indeed the last, if not the least, valiant champion of the old race, the antagonism is definitely posed and consistently worked out. With the death of Īśvar Gupta, we are at the end of the most effective note in the ancient trend of thought and feeling; and followers of the old tendency thereafter, in struggling to maintain their own against the stronger drift of new ideas, were obviously fighting for a lost cause. Ever since that time the cause may indeed be regarded as lost, and any attempt to-day to revive the old style would be possibly as futile and ridiculous as the

Antagonism between two opposing tendencies in the 19th century literature.

Decay of the old style; but its unmistakable influence in later literature.

attempt of Don Quixote to revive the expiring days of chivalry. But, even though the cause was lost, its lessons were not lost; the principles for which it had fought survived and found gradual acceptance. However imperceptible the process had been, it succeeded in tempering the unlicensed Europeanisation of later literature: it afforded a healthy antidote against the unchecked alienation of literature from national sensibilities; it represented a strong counter-current of purely native energy, which, if it never forced itself directly to the surface, never at the same time failed to make its subtle and wholesome influence felt. It is a mistake to suppose that the old tendency absolutely died out with the death of Īśvar Gupta. It never died out but it left its enduring vitality in the current of national thought and feeling, unmistakable influence of which may be traced even in the literature of to-day. The spirit of an age or race, yielding to that of its successor, continues to abide in it as anessential ingredient, assumed, transformed and carried forward.

In an historical survey of the 19th century literature, therefore, we cannot mistake the significance of this tendency of literature, which derived its inspiration primarily from conditions of national culture which were not accessible to European or Europeanised writers of the first half of that century. We must indeed give the more prominent place to European writers and those who trod in their footsteps, because it is chiefly through their efforts, aided no doubt by the hand of the foreign government, that the dominance of western ideas ultimately strengthened itself and gave the final bent to the form and spirit of modern literature; yet the account of the period would surely be incomplete if we do not take into consideration this stream of purely indigenous activity flowing in the opposite direction and the extent of

its influence in moulding the literary characteristics of the age.

The historical importance of these indigenous writers.

The historical importance, therefore, of this inferior but not insignificant band of writers belonging to the old school lies, mainly as we have seen, in the fact that whatever may be the intrinsic value of their writings they examplify and hand down in their own way the failing inspiration of earlier days and thus maintain the continuity of literary history during the period of interregnum between the death of Bhārat Chandra and the emergence of the new school. Although some of them lived far into the first half of the 19th century they do not reflect the growing literary tendencies of the new era but they keep up the old manner of thought, the old fashion of imagination, and the old form of expression and thus secure the inheritance of ancient literature for the advantage of the new generation. Standing as they do, on the the gateway of modern literature they give little or no presentiment of things to come, they do not announce the future; but they represent the past and stoutly, if unconsciously, make their stand for a fast disappearing form of art and expression which drew its inspiration from the past life of the nation itself and which was not without its significance to the new life the nation was entering upon.

Value of this literature not to be ignored or forgotten.

There was a time, however, when the value of these writings was totally forgotten or ignored. They appeared contemptible in the eyes of the so-called Young Bengal of the last century who had been tutored rigidly in western ideas and western literature to the exclusion of everything national. Even to-day

it is doubtful if we have entirely outgrown this stage of defective mental susceptibility, although critics are not wanting who would go to the other extreme of fanatical admiration. Īśvar Gupta, in the early fifties, spoke in exuberantly enthusiastic language of the untutored songs of the old Kabis; yet if we are to take Baṅkim-chandra as the representative of the next generation, we find his age regarding these compositions with frank disapproval, if not always with superior contempt. In recent years, when we are not altogether obtuse and irresponsive, we have taught ourselves to speak in sober tone and measured language. In literary history, there are no doubt extreme vicissitudes of taste whereby the idols of the past generation crumble suddenly to dust, while new favourites are raised to the old pedestal of glory; yet in spite of such successive waves of aesthetical preference, we must guard against falling into the error of orthodox dogmatism, on the one hand, and the ignorant following of fashion, on the other. Leaving aside personal predilections and the narrowness of sects and coteries we find critics even to-day who would see nothing in these forms of literature which is well worth a moment's thought. Much of this literature, as in the case of some of the songs of the Kabiwalas, is no doubt transient and ephemeral and there is certainly much in it which is really contemptible; yet the frivolity of an imitative culture or the wild pursuit of ever-shifting literary fashion ought not to blind us to the historical and literary value, whatever it might be, of the art and literature of a generation which has passed away. It is idle to regard any particular form of art or mode of utterance as final or absolutely authoritative. Critical taste should be more open-minded and unprejudiced and the study of literature should be placed upon sounder historical and scientific methods.

We propose in the following pages to take these writers in the old style in the groups mentioned below. It would not be necessary for us to deal with this class of writings in minute detail; it would be enough for our purpose if we indicate broadly the phase of literary development which they represent and give a more or less general survey of their work and achievement. It may be noted here at the outset that in the case of many of these groups, materials for study are extremely scanty and scattered, and most of the writings which belong to this section have not been yet critically studied or edited. In the case of *Pāñchāli* and *Yātrā* and devotional songs, for instance, no attempt has yet been made to collect either data and materials for tracing their systematic history or even to make a satisfactory collection of these floating and fast vanishing forms of literature. Under this condition of imperfect knowledge of the subject no apology is necessary for imperfect treatment and what is offered here must be taken as nothing more than a merely tentative and preliminary attempt.

Grouping of this literature.

(1) Kabiwalas.

(2) Nidhu Bābu and writers of *Ṭappā*.

(3) Followers of Rām-prasād and writers of devotional songs.

(4) Followers of Bhārat-chandra.

(5) Isolated followers of ancient authors: Jaynārāyaṇ Ghoṣāl, Raghunandan Gosvāmī and others.

(6) Authors of *Pāñchāli* and *Yātrā*.

(7) Miscellaneous songsters.

CHAPTER X

Kabiwalas

The existence of Kabi-songs may be traced to the beginning of the 18th century or even beyond it to the 17th, but the most flourishing period of the Kabiwalas was between 1760 and 1850. Rāsu and Nṛsiṁha were born somewhere between 1734 and 1738; Haru Ṭhākur in 1738; Nitāi Bairāgī in 1747; so that between 1760 and 1780, they had all reached the height of their reputation as songsters and made this form of literary amusement popular throughout the country. During the continuance of the dual government therefore between 1765 and 1775, and in the period of literary interregnum which followed upon the death of Bhārat-chandra, they were the most considerable pretenders in the literary field; and if the mantle of the old authors did not exactly suit their narrow shoulders, they attempted in the main to echo the sentiment and ideas of old-world poetry. Most of these greater Kabiwalas lived into the period of British rule. Rāsu and Nṛsiṁha died between 1805 and 1807; but Haru Ṭhākur lived up to 1812 and Nitāi even beyond that to 1821. Rām Basu, though in a sense considerably junior to these earlier poets, having been born in 1786, died early in 1828. After these greater Kabiwalas, came their followers, disciples and imitators who maintained the tradition of Kabi-poetry up to the fifties or beyond it. The Kabi-poetry therefore covers roughly the long stretch of a century from 1760 to 1860, although after 1830 all the greater Kabiwalas one by one had passed away and Kabi-poetry had rapidly

Chronology and classification of Kabi-literature.

declined in the hands of their less gifted followers. We shall have therefore to distinguish three different periods of Kabi-literature—(1) Before 1760. (2) Between 1760 and 1830. (3) After 1830.

The Kabi-poetry, however, has been subjected to an amount of harsh and even contemptuous criticism which it hardly ever deserved. The Reforming Young Bengal of the forties considered all forms of popular amusements —*Kabi*, *Yātrā*, or *Pāñchāli*—to be contemptible. We shall see that there had gradually come into Kabi-songs elements which were really contemptible ; but what strikes one in the study of these popular forms of literature is that throughout the 19th century, with the exception of Īśvar Gupta and a few isolated appreciators of things ancient, the so-called educated men of that century hardly ever cared to make a sympathetic study, much less to realise their literary or historical importance. Even to-day they do not seem to have received their due amount of attention or appreciation, although none but the most opinionative or the most obtuse would seriously consider them to be wholly worthless or wholly contemptible. Inspite of the apparent uncertainty of critical determinations, the historical importance of these songs, apart from all question of artistic valuation, cannot surely be denied. The old Kabi-literature does not require an apologist to-day but it stands upon its own inherent claims to be treated in an historical survey of Bengali literature of this century.

Unfavourable reception of these songs in later times.

But the materials and means for a critical study of this literature are extremely scanty ; and at the same time it is doubtful whether even much of it can bear very well a thorough critical examination. We

Materials and means of study scanty.

at present find only scattered abroad a few fragments which may convey a knowledge of this literature but which are insufficient to familiarise us with it so as to enable us either to appreciate its beauty, construct its history or determine its value. Informations about the lives of these Kabiwalas or with regard to the general history of Kabi-poetry are extremely scanty; what remains consists of a few traditional stories, often useless and ill-authenticated.

Why the literature was not preserved.

When we consider the peculiar conditions under which most of these songs were composed and the mode in which they were transmitted we can, to some extent, understand why a very small and fragmentary part of this literature has come down to us. These Kabis were not properly speaking, leisured and accomplished men of letters, cultivating literature for its own sake, and their productions were not deliberate literary compositions meant for a critical audience. Their very name *Dāṁḍā Kabi* (দাঁড়াকবি)[1] indicates perhaps the peculiar way in which they extemporised their songs, standing like a rhapsodist before a motley assembly, although it is difficult to say from what time exactly this appellation was first applied to them. The evil days of the latter half of the 18th century, we have seen, necessitated the growth of a class of "poets" whose calling had

Peculiar method af composition and mode of transmission.

[1] It seems that this epithet is very old: but according to one version the epithet *Dāṁḍā Kabi* was applied to distinguish *Kabi* from *Hāp-ākhḍāi*, which was a hybrid species, formed out of *Kabi* and *ākhḍāi*, and which was therefore a kind of *basā-kabi*. (Preface to *Manomohan Gītābalī*, written by Manomohan Basu himself.) But see *Janma-bhūmī*, vii, p. 58.

now become an irregular profession and a regular means of livelihood, and of a body of literature which was marked by carelessness rather than by scrupulousness and which belonged to that class of writings conveniently termed ephemeral journalism. The authors had no higher ambition than that of immediately pleasing their patrons and gaining their cheap praise and pay. They never cared to reach that mark of excellence which would make posterity pause before it would willingly let their productions perish. These songs, again, had generally circulated in the mouths of the people ; in course of time, while some were forgotten, others got curiously mixed up or passed through strange transformations until, as in their present extant form, they can hardly be called the genuine original works of their creator, or with confidence be referred to this or that individual author. No critical appreciation or discrimination was expected and none was made. The literature was forgotten no sooner than a generation had passed away. Even in 1854, Īśvar Gupta lamented that most of these songs had already vanished in his time or had been fast vanishing and his self-imposed task of collecting these old songs had been rendered difficult by the fact that he had to depend entirely upon the uncertain and fleeting memory of old men who had been, day by day, dropping away. Except Nidhu Bābu among the earlier group—and Nidhu Bābu, though a patron of *ākhḍāi*, can hardly be classed as a Kabiwala—none of these poets or their followers ever cared to reduce their songs to writing. Printing was hardly known in those days and, if known, was too expensive and difficult of access to these needy songsters ; yet men like Haru Ṭhākur had rich patrons like Rājā Naba Kṛṣṇa to whom it had never occurred that these floating songs were worth

preserving. The change of taste and fashion in the next generation and the contempt with which all earlier writing had come to be regarded could hardly favour the idea of preserving or collecting this literature in any form. It is not surprising therefore that no attempt at a collection and preservation of these songs had been made till in 1854, Īśvar Gupta, whose poetic sympathies allied him with Kabiwalas and who himself was no mean composer of Kabi-song, first collected and published some to these half forgotten songs in the pages of his *Saṁbād-prabhākar*. It is chiefly through his untiring zeal and devoted labours, ably seconded by the efforts of a few other later collectors, that we possess what remains of this Kabi-literature ; for although several inferior anthologies have been made since then, most of these, with or without acknowledgment, draw liberally from the rich fund which he had supplied half a century ago and little substantial addition has been made to our knowledge ever since.

Our chief source of information

It is very difficult, in the absence of materials, to trace the origin of this peculiar form of literature, hardly at all literary, which expressed itself in songs but which was chiefly meant for popular amusement. Most of the songs which have come down to us belong to a date posterior to the middle of the 18th century ; in tracing, therefore, the form and spirit of this verse, as it existed earlier than this date, we must be guided chiefly by conjecture derived from the study of the later fragments which have been preserved as well as by an examination of the general drift of the literature itself. It must be noted, however, that song-literature is not a novel thing in Bengali : for it had formed

Origin and growth of Kabi-poetry.

a part of the social and religious life of the people, and religious festivities, enlivened by singing, were celebrated with a gaiety which had its mundane side. Even with the decline of Baiṣṇabism, which had brought in its wake a glorious time of sweet singing, and with the revival of Śākta and other forms of literature in the 18th century, the tradition of song-making had never been extinct. The Baiṣṇabs, by their peripatetic singing, had spread songs broadcast leavening, as they did, the popular mind ; and although times and circumstances had changed, the perennial love of song, which marks Bengali literature throughout its history, always survived. The political troubles of the 18th century and the social changes consequent thereupon naturally precluded any serene exercise of serious literature except perhaps in remote villages or in the comparatively secure and luxurious courts of noble patrons ; but the popular craving was satisfied, on the one hand, by *yātrās*, *pāṁchāli*, and other cognate forms of popular literature in which also there was always an exclusive preponderance of the song-element, and by the devotional songs like those of Rām-prasād and his followers, on the other. It was about this time that the Kabiwalas had come into prominence. The time was not for thought : it wanted song and amusement ; the Kabiwalas, who could give them, had soon become popular.

The audience for whom it was composed

But the days of royal or other forms of patronage had been fast vanishing. The poets fallen on evil days, had to depend more and more upon the favour of the capricious and half-educated public who now became their chief patrons. The ruin of old zemindars and princely houses, begun in the latter days of the Mohammedan rule and completed

in the earlier days of British supremacy, had brought into existence, as we have seen, a class of up-start landlords and speculators who stepped into their places but who could not be expected to possess the same inherited tradition of culture and refinement as marked the ancient aristocracy of the land. The commercial banians, śeṭhs, and merchants, on the other hand, in the new flourishing cities, now growing into importance, constituted themselves a class of patrons who demanded literature, not of a fine stuff but that which could afford them momentary excitement of pleasure in the intervals of engrossing business. The new public had neither the leisure, the capacity nor the willingness to study or appreciate any reproduction of the finer shades and graces of earlier poetry. This was the audience[1] for whom, in the main, the Kabiwalas sang their songs, and it is no wonder that the tone and temper of the literature they produced was debased through this unholy contact. This debasement was complete in the next generation when with the spread of western education and consequent revolution in taste, these songs had been banished totally from 'respectable' society and descended to the lower classes who demanded a literature suited to their uneducated

reacted upon it and contributed to its debasement.

[1] The suggestion (Dinesh Chandra Sen, *History*, p. 697) that the low caste of the songsters show that the institution was essentially for the amusement of the illiterate rustics who formed its chief audience, is hardly borne out by facts. This form of entertainment obtained specially in urban centres like Chandannagar, Chinsurah and Calcutta and most of the Kabiwalas were not rural rustics but men bred up in the cities. Rām Basu, Haru Ṭhākur, Nitāi Bairāgī and indeed the whole host of them lived in Calcutta or in the neighbouring cities. Kabi-poetry itself, if not completely urban, is however devoid of all stamps of rusticity.

taste. This was the beginning of *khemṭ* (খেউড়) and *Hāp-ākhḍāi* (হাপ-আখড়াই) in Kabi-literature. In the earlier days Kabi-songs had been composed and sung in great ceremonies and festivals and the subjects of these songs generally referred to religious themes; in the latter days, even in the days of Nitāi Bairāgi, Īśvar Gupta tells us, "বিশিষ্ট জনেরা ভদ্রগানে এবং ইতর জনেরা খেউড় গানে তুষ্ট হইত"; and an illustrative anecdote is related, with reference to Nitāi, which runs thus: [1] এমত জনরব যে, বসন্তকালে কোন এক রজনীতে কোন স্থানে ইনি সখীসংবাদ ও বিরহ গাহিয়া আসর অত্যন্ত জমাট্ করিয়াছেন, তাবৎ ভদ্রেই মুগ্ধ হইয়া শুনিতেছেন ও পুনঃ পুনঃ বিরহ গাহিতেই অনুরোধ করিতেছেন, তাহার ভাবার্থ গ্রহণে অক্ষম হইয়া ছোটোলোকেরা আসরে দাঁড়াইয়া চিৎকার পূর্ব্বক কহিল 'হ্যাদ্ দেখ্ লেতাই, ফ্যার্ ঝদি কালকুকিলির গান ধল্লি, তো, দো, দেলাম, খাড়্ গা,' নিতাই তচ্ছ্রবণে তৎক্ষণাৎ মোটাভজনের খেউড় ধরিয়া তাহারদিগের অস্থির চিত্তকে সুস্থির করিলেন।

Not only in taste, but also in theme, style and diction, Kabi-songs degenerated. The later group of poems from this point of view affords an interesting contrast to the works of the earlier period. We shall have occasion to speak of this matter in detail but it may be noted here at the outset that a wide divergence in method, manner and inspiration exists between the earlier and the later groups of Kabi-poetry. The earlier Kabi-songs were not, as generally supposed, wholly unpremeditated and wanting in all sense of artistic arrangement or unity of structure; on the contrary, they were all composed as we shall see with due deference, as

Degeneration of later Kabi-poetry in theme, style and diction.

[1] *Sambād Prabhākar*, Agrahāyan 1, 1261, p. 6.

in the case of the sonnet, to definite rules of line-arrangement, general structure and rhyme-ending. In later times, with the introduction of lively *hāp-ākhḍāi* and *khemṭā*, the more studied structure of earlier songs were replaced by a mode of utterance, off-hand but effective in its unexpectedness and vigorous vulgarity, defiant of all laws and lost to every sense of artistic composition. We hear of the existence of disputants or two opposing 'parties' who took up different aspects of a particular theme and replied to each other in songs, even from the very earliest time when this form of amusement had sprung into existence; and it was probably these passados in the bout of poetical dialectics which had lent in the popular mind a piquancy and zest to these songs and had thus made them preferable perhaps to *yātrās* and *pāñchālis* which did not include such 'wit-combats' in their scope. But in the earlier period, a consultation used to be held between the parties and the themes and 'replies' were made ready before they were sung. It was Rām Basu, a later Kabiwala, who first introduced the innovation of extempore and free verbal fight between the parties.[1] From his time, these 'flytings' of the Kabiwalas had become, in the proper sense, unpremeditated; and as such, they had come to possess all the qualities and defects of unpremeditated compositions. The unexpected turns of phrases, the clash of witticism, the pungent raciness of colloquial vulgarity were no doubt pleasing to the mob: but what is good rhetoric for the groundlings is bad for literature. We can never expect any literary finish or artistic grace in compositions which the necessity of quick and witty reply had brought into existence and

[1] *Prāchīn Kabi-saṁgraha*, ed. Gopāl Chandra Mukhopādhyāy, B.S. 1284, Introduction, p. ii.

which were meant to be more racy and effective than anything else. Coarseness, scurrility and colloqualism, unredeemed by any sense of artistic expression, began to increase in volume and ultimately Kabi-songs subsided into vulgar and abusive verbiage.

Better quality of earlier Kabi-poetry.

It is not surprising, therefore, to find that to many a modern reader, Kabi-literature connotes little more than *kenal* and bad taste; but it must not be forgotten that in its inception, it drew its inspiration from a purer source. The sincere religiousness of the earlier Kabi-songs is unmistakable and inspite of later importation and popularity of subjects like *Biraha* or *Sakhī-saṁbād*,[1] religion still continued to supply the essential ingredient. Although there are many things which at once mark them off from the Baiṣṇab poets, the earlier Kabiwalas were in more than one sense, nearly allied to their great predecessors. When Baiṣṇabism and its romantic literature had subsided lower and lower into a kind of decrepitude in the 18th century and a militant Śākta literature of a more or less classical type had grown up, the Kabiwalas, in however groping fashion, tried to keep up the older tradition and sang generally of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. The classical form of art which had taken shape in the 18th century and culminated in the writings of Bhārat Chandra was the result as well as the cause of the rapid decline of Baiṣṇabism and its

Its religious themes

[1] *Sakhīsaṁbād* was not secular in theme but in spirit. It included such things as *Prabhātī* or *Bhor-gāna* (Awakening of Rādhā or Kṛṣṇa in the morning or Rādhā's morning appearance as a *khaṇḍitā*), *Gostha*, (in which figure Yośodā, the boy Kṛṣṇa and his boy-companions), *māthur* (where Kubjī and Brndī generally come in), besides *Ujjhaba-saṁbād*, *Prabhās* etc.

literature in that period ; and the 18th century literature is marked throughout by an entire absence of the literary influence of the lyric and romantic songs of Baiṣṇab poets. The literary practice of the 18th century is a natural reaction and going back to conventional standards of verse-making, with a more or less decided leaning towards the ornate and the erudite. Rhetoric rather than truth, fancy rather than imagination, intellect rather than feeling—this becomes the more mundane means of poetry, in which we miss the passionate idealism or the lyric mysticism of the Baiṣṇabs. The Kabiwalas, no doubt, were carried away more or less by this general literary drift of the period ; but it was the Kabiwalas alone who had kept up the tradition of Baiṣṇab poetry in this age of a militant literary tendency. That Kabi-literature, in some way or other, is connected with Baiṣṇab literature and that the Kabiwalas, were, if not the lineal descendant, at least distantly related to the great Baiṣṇab poets, is shown to some extent by the fact that the best part of earlier Kabi-songs relates to the eternal Baiṣṇab theme—the love of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa with all its attendant intricacies of *mān*, *māthur*, *biraha*, *goṣṭha*, and other things. The Kabiwalas, it is true, have not got much of the accumulated virtue of Baiṣṇab verse and phrase as well as its deep note of passion and fulness of romantic colour ; yet it is remarkable that they still make use of the imagery and the hackneyed generalities of Baiṣṇab writings, and generally echo the sentiments and ideas which had become established in literary usage since the time of the Baiṣṇab poets. It is not always safe to dogmatise, in the absence of evidence, on influences or on the question of literary filiation ; but these facts, among others, would tend to indicate the existence of an

Alliance with the Baiṣṇab poets.

unmistakable relationship between the Baiṣṇab writers and the Kabiwalas. It is true that the Kabiwalas never possessed the genius and devotional fervour of the old Baiṣṇab poets, that none of the Kabi-songs reaches that standard of literary excellence which has made Baiṣṇab poetry so resplendent, and that the Kabiwalas, in course of time, admitted more mundane subjects and themes and allowed themselves infinite looseness of speech and style: yet when we come across lines like the following sung by Nitāi Bairāgī

শ্যামের বাঁশী বাজে বুঝি বিপিনে।
বঁধূর বাঁশী বাজে বুঝি বিপিনে॥
নহে কেন অঙ্গ অবশো হইলো,
সুধা বরিষিলো শ্রবণে॥

we are at once reminded of many a line from the Baiṣṇab poets, although it is quite probable that it is not a question of direct imitation or assimilation and that none of the Kabiwalas had any straight access to any of these older poets. The Kabiwalas were not a lettered class of studious poets: they probably never had any opportunity of directly utilising the ancient wealth of the land; yet whatever might have been the source through which the tendency had filtered down, they echo primarily in their songs the sentiment and taste of a bye-gone age, and through this inherited tendency and probably through indirect, if not direct, literary filiation, they trace their ultimate ancestry to the ancient Baiṣṇab poets.[1]

[1] The theory, put forward by Dineshchandra Sen (*History*, p. 697) that Kabi-songs originally constituted parts of old *yātrās*, the simple operatic episodes of which were separately worked up into this special species, is hardly convincing; for in the first place, there are no data to support this suggestion: secondly, the two kinds had essentially different characteristics; and thirdly, the one is not due to the break-up of

It is not our purpose here te enter into details but any student of ancient Bengali literature is well aware that Baiṣṇab poetry cannot be very strictly described as simple and unsophisticated; for although it can to-day be enjoyed as pure poetry or as the expression of fervent religious longings in the language of human passion, it can never be regarded as the spontaneous product of an uncritical and ingenuous faith. This religious-amatory poetry presupposed a psychology and a metaphysic which had been reduced to an elaborate system and which possessed a peculiar phraseology and a set of conceits of its own. The romantic commonplaces of Baiṣṇab poetry, familiar to any reader not only through its poetry but also through elaborate rhetorical treatises like *Ujjvala-Nīlamaṇi* or elaborate semi-metaphysical works like *Ṣaṭ-sandarbha* or *Hari-bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, are in a sense factitious, professional and sectarian, if not doctrinaire or didactic. Many of the famous Baiṣṇab poets, no doubt, got out of their conventional material the kind of effect which appeals to us most strongly and there is the sheer force of poetic inspiration in many of them which lifts their poetry into the highest level of artistic utterance, yet all the floods of their lyric and romantic idealism cannot altogether cover their psychological formalism, their rhetoric of ornament and conceits, their pedantry of metaphysical sentimentalism. The endless diversity of amorous condition grouped conveniently under *mān*, *māthur*,

The spirit of Baiṣṇab poetry and its psychological and metaphysical formalism.

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the other as both existed simultaneously throughout the course of their literary history. The other theory (*Janma-bhūmi*, vii., p. 58) that Kabi was originally a part of *Pāñchāli* is more or less open to similar objections. The exact significance of the term *Pāñchāli* itself is uncertain; what character it possessed in earlier times is not definitely known.

biraha, *pūrbarāg*, *milan* and the like, is treated no doubt with emotional directness but they subside into agreeable formulas and dogmatic shibboleths. Leaving aside individual independence of trait so marked in poets like Bidyāpati, Chaṇḍīdās or Jñānadās, when we come to the legion of lesser lights we find that, although these minor poets share more or less in the general poetic spirit pervading the age, there is yet a monotonous sameness of characteristics, inevitably suggesting a sense of artificiality. In spite of its romantic charm and lyric affluence, the themes and subjects of this poetry lacked variety and exuberance of inventive thought. We meet over and over again with the same tricks of expression, the same strings of nouns and adjectives, the same set of situations, the same group of conceits and the same system of emotional analysis. In the greater poets, the sentiment is refined and the expression sufficiently varied ; in the lesser poets, they degenerate into rigid artistic conventionalities. When the Kabiwalas came to inherit the spiritual estate of their poetical ancestors, Baiṣṇab poetry had been reduced almost to a mechanic art ; its conceptions had become stereotyped and its language conventional. But its faith, its religious enthusiasm, had by that time filtered down through all the crudities of its surroundings into a simple unquestioned and habitual form of religiosity. Its spiritual essence alone survived ; its commonplaces and conceits, its pedantry and formalism had lost much of their force and had become effete conventionalities. Although Kabi-poetry, in its theme and diction, is generally conventional and mechanically reproductive, yet it concerns itself chiefly with the essential significance of Baiṣṇab poetry, its devotional fervour, its emotional appeal and not directly with its metaphysical or psychological banalities. It is

imperfectly communicated to Kabi-poetry.

the habitual and unreflecting faith of the people, unaffected by any scholastic or sectarian prepossessions, that supplied the chief ingredient of Kabi-poetry. In this sense, Kabi-literature is neither scholastic nor cultured, nor is it factitious and professional. None of the Kabiwalas was literate enough to enter into the intricacies of emotional or metaphysical subtlety nor had they any sectarian tradition behind to implant in them anything other than its simple spiritual significance which had percolated and spread down even to the masses. They had taken Baiṣṇabism *en masse* and not in its details, in its essence and not in its accidents, though they tacitly accepted and mechanically repeated its conceits and its imagery, its time-honoured dogmas and doctrines.

Kabi-poetry is not cultured, factitious or sectarian.

It would be unjust to institute a comparison between the Baiṣṇab lyrics and the songs of the Kabiwalas ; but it must be noted that the latter in many cases debased and vulgarised, while they borrowed, the ideas and conceptions of Baiṣṇab poetry. One particular section of Baiṣṇab poetry, remarkable for its passion and its poetic quality, which is generally grouped under the heading of *Prema-baichitta* (প্রেমবৈচিত্ত) is practically non-existent in Kabi-literature. Unable to enter into its subtlety, its romantic fervour and its mystic spiritualism, the Kabiwalas could not speak in the same rapturous accents nor with the same nobility of sentiment. It is true that both these species of literature were never intended originally to be literature at all ; they never consisted of deliberate literary creation by self-conscious artists. Religious enthusiasm, on the one hand, and popular amusement, on the other, supplied the motive of its making in each case ; and in so far as each species adhered

Kabi-poetry is not a deliberate literary creation of self-conscious artists.

to this original motive, each assumed its distinctive character. The peculiar conditions under which it was produced modified the form and tendency of the production of each kind. But while under the stress of a new-born religious fervour and its lyric and mystic idealism, the creations of Baisnab poets were lifted into the region of pure poetry, the more mundane object and secular interest of the Kabiwalas dragged them down to a dead level of uninspired commonplace. It is indeed very doubtful whether a great deal of Kabi-poetry can, with the utmost allowance, be regarded as strictly literary, so deeply had the peculiar condition of its making affected the character of its production.

It was primarily a form of popular amusement.

Kabi-poetry must be primarily regarded as a form of popular amusement, affording no doubt an interesting field of study to the student of social history but hardly to be considered by the historian of literature except in so far as it rises to the level of literature.

Although essentially a popular form of amusement, composed chiefly by popular poets and transmitted through oral tradition, yet it must be noted that Kabi-songs hardly bear any resemblance to what may be strictly called folk-literature or popular poetry. It would be a mistake to compare them, for instance, to the medieval European ballads either in form or spirit. The Kabi-literature no doubt possesses the same dramatic or mimetic qualities and choral peculiarities: but they lack the condition of communal composition which is essential to balladry and the poetical content is not, as in balladry, narrative nor is it submitted to an epic process of transmission. It is not simple, anonymous and objective in the sense in which the ballads are but it bears all the marks of indivi-

But it is not strictly folk-literature or popular poetry.

dual authorship and all the conventionalities of a literary tradition ; it has never shown, in its growth and development, any tendency towards the romance, the story or the chronicle so as to take it out of its original dramatic and choral structure. The songs of the illiterate Kabiwalas no doubt enter into a vital rapport with the people who compose the nation, the people who are far more puissant and important in national history than the so-called cultivated minority. At the same time, if they constitute popular poetry at all, they represent only a very narrow type of that species: for the true function of popular poetry is the interpretation of the people to themselves and and the creation of a popular ideal, which function these songs discharge only partially ; while the forms and expressions of this literature are much less the property of the race than of the individual. These poets were no doubt born among the people[1], lived with the people and understood perfectly their ways of thinking and feeling ; hence their direct hold upon the masses of whom many a modern writer is contentedly ignorant. But these poems, meant for popular entertainment and bearing a close contact with the people, hardly ever speak of the people themselves and possess little or no democratic sympathy or exaltation. They are thoroughly preoccupied with the conventional themes of earlier poets, though their treatment may be a little popular, and they even express themselves in conventional diction and imagery. They

It is the product of a conventional literary tradition

[1] Kabi-poetry counted its votary amongst the lowest classes. Except Haru Ṭhākur, Rāsu and Nṛsiṁha, Rām Basu and a few others, the Kabiwalas belonged to the lowest social grades of a *muchi* (shoemaker), a *maẏarā* (sweetmeat-vendor), a *chhutar* (carpenter), a *feringi* (half-bred Eurasian), *svarṇakār* (goldsmith), a *tāṁti* (weaver), etc. In this catholicity it resembles Baiṣṇabism itself.

have got a literary tradition behind them the banalities of which they cannot always transcend and overstep into true democratic poetry.

But this literary tradition they had modified in their own way, particularly through circumstances and conditions under which they composed and over which they had no control and partly through an inherent lack of a thorough grasp upon the realities of old poetry. The themes which they handled had possessed, in the hands of older poets, qualities capable of evoking a great art; but the less exalted treatment of the Kabiwalas could hardly work them up into new shapes of beauty with sufficient power and subtlety. It was their misfortune to represent an essentially decadent art. Every literature, to speak in metaphorical language which must not be strained, passes through the necessary stages of birth, growth, decline and death. In these metrical exercises of the Kabiwalas we see not the adult manhood of old literature but its senile decrepitude. The poetry is reminiscent rather than spontaneous: it is reproductive and imitative rather than, in the true sense, creative. It is true that most of the songs which the Kabiwalas extemporised were unsought and unpremeditated: yet in their homage to old-world conventions in style, theme, and literary treatment, they belonged to a decaying dynasty the prestige of which, in spite of their belated efforts, had been fast vanishing.

representing a phase of decadence of the earlier art.

But even in their imitativeness, they could not always reproduce the fine shades and graces of old poetry, its weight, its elevation and its profundity. There are many things, no doubt, in Baisnab *padāvalīs* which are not in any sense commendable but in their places and as a part of the whole they may pass

Its inability to reproduce the finer shades and graces of earlier poetry.

off without much incongruity. But in the songs of the Kabiwalas these things, severed from their true relations and from their natural surroundings of beauty, assumed an incongruous independence and a distorted shape, incompatible with artistic or spiritual excellence, especially as it is often dressed in weak phraseology and loose versification. The Baiṣṇab poetry unfolds before our vision such an extensive realm of beauty that its occasional deformities and blemishes are easily passed over, nor do they appear in their natural state artistically inconsistent. Apart from all questions of spiritual interpretation, the ideal of love depicted in Baiṣṇab poetry may have, from a layman's stand-point, departed in places from the strictness of propriety or decorum, but if after a study of the poetry in its entirety, a man does not rise with an impression of its beauty and nobility, then the conclusion is obvious that either he has not read it properly or that he is impervious to all sense of its excellence. In the infinite varieties of amorous situation, the description of Rādhā as a *khaṇḍitā* heroine or of Kṛṣṇa as an arch-deceiver may have, leaving aside other explanations, an artistic justification of enhancing the beauty of this poetry by adding to it an element of playful toying (*chhalanā*) or wayward vagary (*bañchanā*) or even a sterner element of distressing poignancy; yet whatever may be the interpretation, it certainly does not dwarf our conception of the finer spirit of Baiṣṇab poetry. Ignoring the considerations of sensual presentation or spiritual explanation, the central and essential idea of Baiṣṇab poetry, embodied in the conception of Rādhā's *kalaṅka*, has an emotional suggestion of its own, which adds an element

The spirit of ancient poetry inadequately represented.

An instance drawn from Kabiwalas' conception and treatment of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.

of intensity and earnestness to the love of Rādhā as the type of a heroine who foregoes all for love. In the poetry of the Kabiwalas these elements severed from their natural context and regarded by themselves assume the somewhat repellent intensity of impertinent interest. Having realised full well that the depth and beauty of Baiṣṇab poetry were beyond themselves or their audience, they had selected and isolated for representation only those portions of it which would appeal more directly by their effective but transient vulgarity. The Kabiwalas therefore give, consciously or unconsciously, more prominence to *kalaṅka* and *chhalanā* over anything else of Baiṣṇab love-poetry; and these elements in their incongruous context are often presented with such unadorned boldness and repulsive relief and with such ill-suited lightness of touch that they become in the end thoroughly inartistic. Kṛṣṇa's wantonness is carried to a frivolously forbidding extent and Rādhā's sense of the affront, thus dealt out by the unfaithful lover, is marked by a singular lack of self-respect and sense of dignity. The process is the process of dethroning a god for the purpose of humanising a scoundrel.

Rādhā and her companions are eternally complaining, with all the silliness of plaintive sentimentality, of the endless amours of the ever deceitful lover; but after all, she takes them very lightly and no great persuasion is necessary to reconcile her in the end to her lover. She laments, she weeps; but her laments are hollow and her tears are idle. The apologist may contend that all these are mere forms of divine sportiveness (খেলা, ছল or লীলা) and that we must not judge them by secular standards. But we must guard against bringing in spiritual considerations in extenuation of artistic inadequacy, although we cannot, it is true, altogether steer ourselves clear of the

question of spiritual interpretation. There is no doubt the dictum of the author of *Ujjvala-Nīlamaṇi* [1] that what is true of Śrīkṛṣṇa is not true of the ordinary lover: but even Rūpa Gosvāmī himself admits that Kṛṣṇa is conceived as the ideal lover, *nāṭachūḍāmaṇi* [2] or *rasika-śekhara*.[3] It is not our purpose here to enter into any discussion of the inner significance of Baiṣṇab poetry or its metaphysical conceptions; what is intended here to be stated is that from the layman's standpoint of artistic criticism, the *abhimān* of Rādhā, as we often find it in the songs of the Kabiwalas, has got hardly any reality in it nor has the love of Kṛṣṇa any deep-rooted strength of feeling which alone would have lifted it into the highest sphere of poetry. So long as the heroine realises that she possesses a strong hold upon her lover's love, the interruption of its smooth course through occasional sportiveness or incidental vagary adds a peculiar charm to the elements of *abhimān*; but when the offence is great and involves faithlessness and disgrace which strikes at the very root of the passion itself, the heroine dishonours herself when she takes it lightly or sits down to villifying, complaining or indulging in a sentimental process of elaborate *abhimān*. Such things hardly possess any appeal artistic or otherwise, and as such should hardly find a place in nobler types of poetry.

One or two illustrations will make out the point we are trying to indicate. Here is a song of Rām

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[1] *Ujjvala-Nīlamaṇi*, i. 18-21 (Nirṇaya Sāgar Ed., pp. 11-24).

[2] *Ibid, loc. cit.*

[3] Kṛṣṇadās Kabirāj's commentary of *Śrīkṛṣṇa Karṇāmṛta* on Śl. 1, 3, 11 etc. This epithet is common enough in Baiṣṇab works.

Basu in which Rādhā is speaking as a *khaṇḍitā* heroine.[1]

সাধ করে করেছিলাম তুচ্ছয় মান,
শ্যামের তায় হল অপমান।
শ্যামকে সাধলেম না ফিরে চাইলেম না
কথা কইলেম না রেখে মান ॥
কৃষ্ণ সেই রাগের অনুরাগে, রাগে রাগে গো,
পড়ে আছে চন্দ্রাবলীর নবরাগে।
ছিল পূর্ব্বের যে পূর্ব্বরাগ, আবার একি অপূর্ব্বরাগ,
আছে রাগে শ্যাম বাধার আদর ভুলে যায় ॥
শ্যাম কাল মান করে গেছে, কেমন আছে, দূতি, জেনে আয়।
কবে আমারে বঞ্চিতে, গেল কার কুঞ্জে বঞ্চিতে,
হয়ে খণ্ডিতে মরি হরির প্রেমের দায়।
ছলে বুঝি মন ছলে গেছে শ্যামরায় ॥
আগে বুঝিবে মন দূরে থেকে চখে দেখে গো,
কয় কিনা কয় কথা ডেকে।
যদি কাতরে কথা কয়, তবে নয় অপ্রণয়,
অমনি সেধ গো ধরে দুটি রাঙ্গা পায় ॥
যার মানের মানে আমায় মানে, সে না মানে,
তবে কি কোরবে এ মানে।
মাধবের কত মান, না হয় তার পরিমাণ,
মানিনী হয়েছি যার মানে ॥
যে পক্ষে যখন বাড়ে অভিমান,
সেই পক্ষে রাখতে হয় সম্মান।
রাখতে শ্যামের মান, গেল গেল মান,
আমার কিসের মান অপমান ॥

[1] *Sahitā Prabhākar*, Āśvin, 1261, p. 1; *Pāchālī Kābi-saṅgraha*, pp. 31-32; *Gīta-ratnāvalī*, pp. 104-106; *Saṅgīt-sara-saṅgraha*, vol. ii, pp. 1001-1002.

And then consider how the companions of Rādhā, in a tone bantering but shamelessly humiliating to themselves, are entreating the shame-faced false lover now seated comfortably in Mathurā.

কও কথা বদন তোল, হও সদয় এই ভিক্ষা চাই ।
রাধার অধৈর্য্যে এলাম আপার্য্যে,
তোমার কংসরাজ্যের অংশ লতে আসি নাই ।
অধোমুখে যদি থাক শ্যাম কুবুজার দোহাই ॥
তোমার সহাস্য বদনে নাই রহস্য,
কেন মাধব আজ দাসীর প্রতি ঔদাস্য,
চারু চন্দ্রাস্য নহে প্রকাশ্য, যেন সর্ব্বস্ব লতে এলেম ভাবছ তাই ॥[1]

And here is a piece of undisguised raillery by Kubjā the new mistress.

কুবুজা কহিছে তুমি রাজা এই মধুভুবনে ।
রাজার উপরে রাজা আছে আগে জানিনে ॥
ওহে গোবিন্দ বড় সন্দ হতেছে,
করেছ প্রেমধার তুমি কোন্ রমণীর কাছে ।
তুমি করে কার দাসত্ব, পেয়েছ রাজত্ব,
সে তত্ত্ব জান্‌তে এসেছে তোমার ॥
আছে খৎ নে পথে বসে, কে রমণী সে,
শ্যাম কি ধার কিছু তার ।
হয়ে আমাদের ভূপতি, ওহে যদুপতি,
কোটালী করেছিলে কোন রাজার ॥
খতে লেখা আছে, ও শ্রীহরি,
খাতক ত্রিভঙ্গ শ্যাম, মহাজন ব্রজকিশোরী ।
মনে আতঙ্ক করি ওই, ত্রিভঙ্গ শুন কই,
তোমা বই ঢেরা সই আর হবে কার ॥ (রামবসু)[2]

[1] *Prāchīn Kabi-saṁgraha*, p. 35.

[2] *Ibid.* pp. 35-36.

And lastly listen to the ingenious but hardly authentic justification of the false lover by himself.[1]

আমি কাহার কেনা নই, ভক্তাধীন রসময়ী,
ভক্তপ্রেমডোরে বাঁধা মন।
ছিল রাবণের সহোদরা এই কুব্জা কন্যান্তরে সই।
কল্লে বাসনা পেতে আমায়, দিয়েছিলাম বর তায়,
হয়ে কৃষ্ণরূপ জুড়াব তার জীবন।
শুনিলে সখীত সকল বিবরণ॥
প্রতিশ্রুত সই ছিলাম কুব্জার,
সেই প্রতিজ্ঞা পূরাতে সাধের ব্রজ হতে,
আসিতে হইয়াছে মথুরায়।
তা বলে বৃন্দে সখি, হয়োনা অন্তরে দুখী,
আমি রাধা বই কারুর নইত কখন॥

It is needless to comment on the tone and spirit of these passages; but the history of love revealed in their course will sufficiently indicate the extent to which the Kabiwalas debased the tenderness, passion and spirituality of earlier Baiṣṇab poetry.

Lowering of the literary ideal

This spiritual inadequacy of the songs of the Kabiwalas necessarily involved a lowering of the literary ideal. There is no doubt here and there, in Rām Basu or in Haru Ṭhākur, a desire for nobler utterance; yet generally speaking, the entire mentality of the Kabi-poets was never of a superior order. They are artists who still handle worn-out themes in old formal ways without the earlier grasp upon them, without fervour of conviction and without anything of perceptive delicacy. Some of the Kabiwalas, no doubt,

[1] *Ibid.* pp. 38-39

were men of high natural endowments but they moved less freely within a narrow and degenerated sphere of thoughts and ideas. The mental attitude of their audience and submission to its influence no doubt proved unwholesome to the growth of their poetry; but they themselves were incapable of interpreting life in any large and original way and therefore limited themselves, wisely or unwisely, to ministering chiefly unto the curiously uncritical habits of the time which demanded nothing more than the transient excitement of cheap rhetoric and cheap ideas. In the period in which they flourished, men had been deprived of a free political and social life, a central capital, the peace and security of an ordered existence and other conditions adequate to the intellectual requirements of an expansive literature. The old style having fallen into decay, the literary ideal could never be very high nor were the opportunities abundant enough for unfolding whatever potentialities this poetry possessed.

The Kabi-literature, therefore, among its crowd of agreeable poems, had produced very few master-pieces, very few works of superb genius destined to immortality. There is a carelessness, a want of balance, a defect of judgment in the choice of materials and their management, a slovenliness of execution throughout the work of this period. Care and grace of style can be expected in the literary craftsman who writes down his thoughts at leisure, for he can rewrite his sentences, recast his phrases, remould stanzas, thus achieving the proper art of style; but the Kabiwalas, who were hardly a lettered class of leisured writers, could never find abundance of time or patience to court the lugubrious muse. They made use of whatever poetic talents they

Artistic inadequacy.

possessed in contributing to the transient amusement of a hardly less illiterate public: and their forensic style, which can only be elevating when the inspiration itself is noble, naturally resulted in a dead level of the commonplace or the conventional.

To arrest the fugitive attention of the audience, the Kabiwalas make abundant use of the borrowed tricks of conventional rhetoric. It is certainly true that out of ten verses even whole stanzas may be found which do not lack power; but, generally speaking, beauty and refinement yield place to a constant striving after effect, to an attempt at clever and spirited improvisation, wanting entirely in strength, art, or polish, though capable, through its effective forensic qualities, of awakening the easily excitable popular enthusiasm. They composed too fast to compose well; and their critical sense was not sufficiently strong to save them from all the faults of fatal fluency and fertility. Hence we find the fault of repetition, frequency of stock-phrases, monotony of identical form and idea, singular baldness of details, childish jingle of weakly, though effective, words, which are unavoidable in oral composition but which appear dull and flat in reading. The sentiment is too often trite and the ideas conventional, and the author, in his futile attempt to disguise his want of originality by frequent affectation and constant use of stilted devices, becomes thoroughly artificial and unconvincing. One of the tricks which is peculiarly favoured by the Kabiwalas for the purpose of impressing upon the fickle sensibilities of an uncritical audience is the excessive use of alliteration and pun. When used with moderation and judgment, alliteration is no doubt

Its affectation and artificiality.

Its habit of punning and use of alliteration.

one of the most useful ornaments of poetical expression and it has not yet lost all its charm in poetry; but the Kabiwalas succumbed to the delusion of imagining that alliteration and punning are the chief ends of poetry. It is needless to cite instances, when instances are so abundant but the following passage[1] as well as the passage quoted at p. 323 will sufficiently indicate the excess to which this pernicious habit was carried.

গেল গেল কুল কুল, যাক্ কুল, তাহে নই আকুল।
লয়েছি যাহার কুল সে আমারে প্রতিকূল।
যদি কুলকুণ্ডলিনী অনুকূলা হন্ আমায়
অকূলের তরী কূল পাবে পুনরায়।
এখন ব্যাকুল হয়ে কি দুকূল হারাবো সই।
তাহে বিপক্ষে হাসিবে যত রিপুচয়॥ (রামবসু)

Even sometimes in these strivings after alliterative appeal, the poet completely sets at defiance even ordinary rules of grammar and composition.

একে নবীন বয়স তাতে সুসভ্য কাব্যরসে রসিকে।
মাধুর্য্য গাম্ভীর্য্য তাতে দাম্ভীর্য্য নাই
আর আর বৌ যেমন ধারা ব্যাপিকে।
অধৈর্য্য হেরে তোরে স্বজনী ধৈর্য্য ধরা নাহি যায়॥[2]

Its abuse of the imagination and of the intellect.

Leaving aside a few deservedly popular pieces which indicate a desire for untrammelled and spontaneous utterance, we find throughout the work of the Kabiwalas an abuse of the imagination and of the intellect. It cannot be denied indeed that some of the Kabiwalas

[1] *Saṁbād Prabhākar*, Āśvin 1261, p. 11; *Gupta-ratnoddhār* ed. Kedārnāth Bandyopadhyāy, p. 151; *Prītigīti*, p. 474.

[2] Quoted in *Sādhanā*, 1302 B.S., pt. ii. p. 65.

possessed undoubted poetic powers ; but they often neglected natural sentiment and made an exhibition of artfulness. The founts of earlier inspiration had been failing and poetry itself coming to be regarded as the means of displaying elaborate conceits, extravagant fancies, bold metaphors and excessive hyperboles. Many of these poets are martyrs to verbal nicety. Fancy is preferred to sense and exuberance of imagery to chastened style. That the education of the Kabiwalas lacked in scholastic strictness produced one good effect, no doubt, namely, that whenever they turned to familiar themes or depended upon their natural genius, their poetry was marked by a sincere homeliness and a swinging and dashing lyrism rare in the precise and meditative utterances of latter-day poets ; yet this very lack of training fostered in them a false and uncritical taste in the choice of poetical ornaments and a singular indifference to the value of artistic restraint. Their poetical style is often very diffuse and inflated, if not trite or given to futile adorning of trivialities ; and it is very seldom that we meet with sustained flights of condensed, poignant and forcible utterance. There are very few songs which are impeccable in every line or studied in every phrase, not to speak of the obvious faults of rhyme, rhythm and metre. The extreme fluency and prolixity of the Kabiwalas stood effectually in the way of their attaining well-balanced artistic effect. The poet is very seldom able to sustain his inspiration from the beginning to the end of his composition. In the beautiful song of Nitāi Bairāgī already referred to[1]

Its diffuse and inflated style.

[1] *Saṁbād Prabhākar*, Agrahāyaṇ 1, 1261, p. 7 ; Kedārnāth Bandyopādhyāy, *Gupta-ratnoddhāra*, p. 176 ; *Kabiyālādiger Gīt*, p. 61 ; *Saṅgīt-sār-saṁgraha*, ii. 1047 ; *Prīti-gīti*, p. 828.

বঁধূর বাঁশী বাজে বুঝি বিপিনে।
শ্যামের বাঁশী বাজে বুঝি বিপিনে॥
নহে কেন অঙ্গ অবশো হইলো
সুধা বরিষিলো শ্রবণে॥
বৃক্ষডালে বসি পক্ষী অগণিতো
জড়বতো কোন্ কারণে।
যমুনার জলে বহিছে তরঙ্গ
তরু হেলে বিনে পবনে॥
একি একি সখি একি গো নিরখি
দেখ দেখি সব গোধনে।
তুলিয়ে বদনো নাহি খায় তৃণো
আছে যেন হীন চেতনে॥
হায়, কিসেরো লাগিয়ে বিদরয়ে হিয়ে
উঠি চমকিয়ে সঘনে।
অকস্মাতো একি প্রেমো উপজিলো
সলিলো বহিছে নয়নে॥
আরো একদিন শ্যামেরো ঐ বাঁশী
বেজেছিলো কাননে।
কুলো লাজো ভয়ো হরিলে তাহাতে
মরিতেছি গুরুগঞ্জনে॥

the beginning and some of the concluding lines are fine but we are left with a sense of inadequacy with regard to the whole and individual parts of the song. There are queer ups and downs in artistic execution, and the poetical inspiration is not kept up uniformly throughout. Those who pin their poetical faith upon "patches," the great mass of Kabi-songs presents examples of certainly great beauty but taken as a whole, the poetry is unequal in merit and

Its inequality.

side by side with higher flights, there are depths of bathos hardly to be paralleled. The common allurements of narrative interest, of varied subject or of striking idea are so rare in this poetry that it is necessary for the poet to screw his inspiration always to the sticking place so that he may not fail. But to reach the full white heat, the steady blaze of poetic emotion is not uniformly possible with these poets, and therefore it is not surprising to find a large amount of tolerable and even flat and insipid verse obtaining side by side with songs of intensely moving quality. Coming to the less inspired later Kabiwalas we find in them a bold use of colloquialism which is sometimes appealing, no doubt, through its veracity and raciness but which very frequently degenerates into unlicensed slang or unredeemed verbiage. No one would seriously contend, for instance, that the following lines of Bholā Mayarā, though racy and ingenious, contains a single spark of poetry.

নাটুর নীচে নাড়ু নড়ে লাড্ডু নয় ভাই।
বৃন্দাবনে বসে দেখ বসু ঘোষের রাই॥
ঘোম্‌টা খুলে চোম্‌টা মারে কোম্‌টা বড় ভারি।
তিন লম্ফে লঙ্কা পার, হাস্‌ছে শুক সারি॥
ঝাঁঝা মেয়ের বেটা হোলো অমাবস্যায় চাঁদ।
আপ্‌টনি জবাব দাও নইলে বাঁধবে বড় ফাঁদ॥

But in spite of this artistic inadequacy of Kabi-poetry, it should never be relegated to the lumber-room of literary curiosity; nor is this poetry to be dismissed as a mere paraphrase of the commonplaces of Baisnab poetry. It is true that the works of the Kabiwalas hardly exhibit any profundity, poignancy, or weight. It is not marked by supreme

Its lack of superior qualities but its true poetic spirit.

splendour of imagination or exuberance of inventive thought. These poets have none of the disturbing tyranny of violent passion or the ecstatic elevation of superior inspiration. But, after all is said, it cannot but be admitted that some of the despised Kabiwalas *are* poets and not poetical curiosities, and that if Kabi-poetry does not always attain a high level of poetical excellence, the level it occasionally reaches is striking enough as a symptom of the presence of the true poetical spirit which it is often impossible to detect for years together in other periods of literary history. Even in the emphatically minor Kabiwalas—often persons quite unknown or unimportant in literature as persons—we come across charming things, lines and phrases and stanzas of exquisite beauty, indicating a general diffusion of the poetic spirit which had made even such inferior songsters beautifully articulate.

The characteristic quality of Kabi-poetry.

One important and characteristic feature of Kabi-poetry consists in the fact that although it was in no sense popular poetry dealing, as it did, with conventional themes in conventional form yet it expressed, through its poets who were of the people, what the people had of the noblest and sincerest as well as of the grossest; and in virtue of this it could be appreciated by the people at large. It may be true that popular appreciation is not the sure touchstone of poetic quality; yet we would lapse into the error of academical dogmatism if we do not take into account the hold which this poetry possessed upon the popular mind as one of the important factors in our consideration. It is salutary as well as significant that no abrupt line divided the poets from the huge uncultivated populations, often contemptuously set down as "the masses." Even while

Its expression of popular feelings and ideas.

dealing with the conventional Baiṣṇab themes, Kabi-poetry is marked by the sincere and unaffected religiousness of the popular mind, if not always by the true spirit of Baiṣṇab literature. In art, in ideas, in poetical inspiration, the Kabiwalas may not be regarded as the true inheritors of ancestral genius yet in honest religious feeling, in sound and simple faith, they do not compare unfavourably with their great predecessors. But it is not here that we find the genius of Kabi-poetry finding its fullest scope. The conditions under which it might have become a legitimate development of Baiṣṇab-poetry had been non-existent and, fortunately or unfortunately, Kabi-poetry had come under conditions and influences totally different. The excellence of Kabi-poetry rests, therefore, not so much upon its rehandling of older themes but upon its presentation of less pretentious but more homely and natural themes which, if these poets were not the first to treat, they were at least the first to work up with considerable effectiveness. Rām Basu's treatment of the themes of *biraha* and *āgamanī* is widely known and deserves its reputation ; but in these, among other themes, not Rām Basu alone but most of the Kabiwalas excelled and found a congenial scope for the display of their natural poetical genius. It is not, however, in the themes themselves so much as in the treatment that the characteristic feature of Kabi-poetry is seen at its best. We shall have to come back to this point later on ; but it may be noted here that these songs, in their sincere force of natural passion and affection and in their simple observation of common things, form a class by themselves, the value of which can never be over-estimated, although most of them have been so

Its sincere religiousness.

Naturalness and sincerity of its *biraha* songs.

hackneyed to us in various ways or have been so queerly dressed in a diction, long out of fashion, that even respectable critics have been led to treat them with unfeigned contempt proverbially associated with familiar things. In these *biraha* songs, however, the note of simplicity and sincerity is unmistakable. There is no thinking about thinking or feeling about feeling, but honest human passion is expressed with a clear vision and with exquisite directness of speech. These poets sang no longer of the loves of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa or find in them a suitable frame-work for voicing their individual or universal human sentiment. They sing of natural human beings, often of themselves, and of the naturalistic human passion; and their expression of the triumph and despair of love, if somewhat crude and even gross, is not sicklied over with reflectiveness as in most modern poets. In the *āgamanī* songs, again, the domestic atmosphere of a Bengali home with its simple joys and sorrows, which find expression in the picture of Menakā the mother and Umā the daughter,[1] creates a peculiar charm of sweet and tender homeliness which is rare in modern poetry. These few

Tenderness and human interest in *āgamanī* songs.

[1] This trait also expresses itself in the *goṣṭha* of *Sakhīsaṁbād* where Yaśodā is generally speaking to the boy Kṛṣṇa. It cannot be determined how far in their *bhabānī-biṣayak* songs, the Kabiwalas influenced or were influenced by the writers of devotional ditties who flourished by their side. There is, however, considerable similarity of trait between the *mālsi* of Rām-prasād and his followers and the *āgamanī* of the Kabiwalas, who were undoubtedly influenced by the special *āgamanī* or *bijayā* songs of Rām-prasād or Kamlākānta. Similarly there is some general resemblance between the *biraha* songs of the Kabiwalas and the love-lyrics of the *tappā*-writers. There must have been some amount of mutual influence and it is quite possible that both these represent phases of a certain humanising tendency of the literature of the age in which they flourished.

wood-notes may lack refinement and polish but they are exceedingly tender, simple and human. And it is by force of its tenderness, its simplicity, and human interest, wherever these qualities may be found, that Kabi-poetry is so appealing. In their form, again, these songs possess not much of stylistic grace and their bold use of colloquialism is often bare and unadorned ; yet the veracity of the vernacular and the raciness of the spoken idiom impart to these songs a charm of their own, easy, direct and simple yet plastic and artful in their very want of art.

It will be amply clear from this that Kabi-poetry cannot be regarded merely as a belated product of the Baisnab school, although in a distant way it attempted to carry on the older tradition. It possesses characteristic trait of its own which marks it off as a distinct, though not independent, type of national utterance. If it is not music yearning like a god in pain, it is characterised by full-throated ease and robust healthy mentality at least in certain spheres. Higher flights of poetry were unsuited to its hard and narrow environment ; the rambling life of its votaries stored their minds with little learning or culture ; they indulged in metrical exercises partly as the means of earning livelihood under the not-too-liberal patronage of the isolated aristocracy of the priests and the princes, of the plain democracy of poor peasants in the remote villages, of the respectable middle class of thrifty merchants and banians in the crowded cities. Though the roar of the cannon at Plassey or Udaynala was but heard faintly by them and they were quite oblivious of the world around them, living and moving in an isolated social world or a conventional poetic world of their own : yet the latter half of 18th century with its

Its permanent literary value.

confused energy, diffused culture and political, social and mental chaos did not demand nor could inspire a literature of great value. There was hardly any leisure for serious writing ; what was wanted was trifles capable of affording excitement, pleasure and song. This poetry, therefore, was never meant for a critical audience, and critical sense or practised art the Kabiwalas hardly possessed any. They lacked ideas and ideal utterance and were constantly hampered by the incubus of a conventional literary tradition ; there is a good deal of sad stuff in their verse-impromptu ; all this and more is admitted. But inspite of these drawbacks and difficulties, Kabi-poetry, in its best aspect, is an entirely homespun production, kindly, genial and indulgent, capable of awakening and keeping popular enthusiasm and possessing simplicity and liquidity of utterance which draws its bone and thew and sinew from the language and ideas of the people themselves who begat them and with whose central life-force they have an unconscious and spontaneous rapport. If it is not popular poetry in the true sense of the term, being mainly derivative and reproductive, its contact with the people, while debasing its nature in certain respects, gave it at the same time a robust and healthy character and a sincere homeliness unaffected by literary prepossessions. Kabi-poetry, therefore, is of a complex character and defies all systematic analysis or rigid labelling as a recognised species to be put into a definite pigeon-hole marked out by the literary critic. Its merit is simplicity and its importance lies in the fact that although the Kabiwalas were incapable of producing the highest type of poetry or painting life broadly or powerfully, they served literature in their simple and homely way by furnishing a stimulus to the emotional life of the country. They succeeded very often in piercing through the gauds and

trimmings of an effete literary tradition and coming direct to the passion and emotion which throb and pulsate in the individual. The ground on which they tread is as plain and simple as that which the peasant daily treads upon with his uncouth feet: yet it is from this common and universal soil that they draw their bracing and genial character. The Kabiwalas may not be the affluent inheritors of the spiritual estate of their ancestors but the apparently trifling things of art which had come down to them as their heir-looms served amply for their unmistakable insignia of rank and status. With thousand and one faults to its credit, the interest arising from the study of Kabi-poetry is not, except to the charlatan or the obtuse, the undesirable interest which springs from the contemplation of superlative crudity; and although universal popular appreciation, as we have already stated, is not the true test of poetic merit, such popular valuation is not to be wholly rejected as a false index by the pedantry of cultured criticism.

Its common universal appeal.

Again, it must be borne in mind that most of these compositions were *songs* and not lyric poems and must be judged as such. It is not possible nor desirable to estimate the value of songs by the standard by which we consider poetical compositions. We must appreciate a song through the ear and not feel it with the eye alone. It is not possible to convey an idea of its melody through an appreciative essay; it must be actually heard before its charm can be fully realised. This remark applies equally to the case of Baiṣṇab *Padābalīs*. Those who have listened to Baiṣṇab songs as well as to the songs of the Kabiwalas, sung by an expert and tasteful singer, may appreciate their charmingness in

Its quality as songs and not merely lyric poems.

a greater degree. When seen in print these delightfully melodious things lose much of their appeal. It may be urged that this element should be rigidly ruled out of court in a strictly literary estimate; but it must not be forgotten that the fame of most of these Kabiwalas rests more upon their musical than upon their literary capacity, for some of them were trained musicians, not ill at verbal numbers but possessing considerable knack of composing what are rather disrespectfully called "words," and that the song-element preponderates in the various forms of ancient literature from Baiṣṇab poetry down to *ṭappā*, *yātrā*, *pāṁchāli* and therefore cannot be totally ignored in any estimate of old Bengali literature or its offshoot.

Its system of versification.

This brings us naturally to the question of the prosodic range of Kabi-poetry and the arrangement of its numbers, its metrical system being closely connected with the conditions of its musical expression. At first sight the verse-system of the Kabiwalas seem to follow no definite rule of arrangement; and this has been more than once severely denounced by puzzled critics.[1] The lines vary in length, are very apparently irregular in rhythm, imperfect in structure and uncertain in accentual or literal or syllabic arrangements; but a careful study will show that there is some sort of harmony in the midst of this apparent discord. It is, no doubt, true that in some of the Kabiwalas there is a hopeless indifference to prosodic regulations; that with regard to the number of words, syllables or accents required in each line, there is no hard and fast rule; and that as such it is impossible to analyse the

[1] See for instance the remarks of Rabīndranāth Ṭhākur in *Sādhanā* (1302 B. S.), pt. ii, p. 65, reprinted in his *Lok-Sāhitya* under the heading 'Kabi-Saṅgīt' at p. 44.

versification wholly by recognised systems of prosody; yet the verse of the Kabiwalas in spite of their frequent prosodic vagaries is self-regulated, following, as it does, a law of its own which varies naturally according to the irresistible ideal or emotional or melodious suggestion. The compositions must be primarily regarded as songs: and in songs, variation of long and short lines is immaterial and the rigid rules of metrical arrangement incapable of uniform application. They can be better sung than read. The words and lines are arranged as they naturally sing and fall into apparently inevitable song-rhythm. But the whole effect is not inharmonious; the music is clear and the movement of the rhymed verses of varying length is easy and natural. The spirit of this verse-system is that of unbounded lawlessness bound only by a law of its own; that of resistance to the established ideal of stereo-typed verses like *payār* or *tripadī* which possess a more or less fixed system of letters or pauses. In this, again, Kabi-poets are following in the footsteps of their Baiṣṇab predecessors, though with a great deal more of unhampered freedom. Whatever may be the defects, the system gives us, however, variety of arrangement, versatility of combination, and infinite suggestion of new verse-forms.

Its opposition to the established system of stereotyped versification and its infinite variety and versatility

But in general structure of the songs, the Kabiwalas followed a more or less definite system of rhyme-arrangement. The exact signification of much of their musical technicalities is lost to us but for our purpose it is not indeed necessary to enter into details. It would be enough to state that the whole musical gamut of each song is arranged in ascending and descending order into several divisions, bound to each other by a peculiar

The general structure and rhyme-arrangement of Kabi-songs.

system of rhyme-ending. These divisions, in their succession, in each complete song, are : *chitān*, *par-chitān*, *phukā*, *meltā*, *mahaḍā* (*saoyāri*, not present, however, in all songs), *khād*, and then second *phukā* and second *meltā*, and lastly *antarā*. If the word-composition is continued, then, *chitān*, etc., come again in their successive order. Now as to the system of rhyme-ending, the *chitān* and *par-chitān* rhyme together. The *phukā*, has a different rhyme-ending ; so also *meltā* which however rhymes in its turn with *mahaḍā* and *khād*. The second *phukā* has an independent rhyme but the second *meltā* rhymes again with *mahaḍā*, while *antarā* closes with a different rhyme-ending altogether. The number of lines which each of these musical divisions contains is immaterial but it is essential that the lines should follow the rhyme-arrangement indicated above ; and this gives, as in stanzaic poems or sonnets, a compactness of arrangement. Taking each division to contain one line we may indicate the rhyme-arrangement in a normal scheme in this way (five rhymes in all *abcde*)—

a *Chitān*
a *Parchitān*
b *Phukā*
c *Meltā*
c *Mahaḍā*
c *Saoyāri*
c *Khād*
d *Second Phukā*
c *Second Mahaḍā*
e *Antarā*

[1] The earlier Kabi-songs are, however, simple in structure, having generally *mahaḍā*, *chitān* and *antarā* only. There is some difference of opinion on this point and different accounts are given. According to a writer in *Bāndhab*, *Pous*, 1282, p. 265, the four divisions of Kabi-songs are *chitān*, *mukh* (or *mahaḍā*), *khād*, *antarā* : or, in some cases, *chitān*, *dhuyā*, *antarā*, *jhumair*.

Here is an illustration from one of the famous songs of Rām Basu arranged in the order indicated[1]—

১ চিতান। গত নিশিযোগে আমি হে দেখেছি সুস্বপন।

১ পরচিতান। এল হে সেই আমার তারাধন।

১ ঝুকা। দাঁড়ায়ে দুয়ারে, বলে মা কই মা কই মা কই
আমার দেখা দাও দুখিনীরে।

১ মেল্‌তা। অম্‌নি দুবাহু পসারি, উমা কোলে করি,
আনন্দেতে আমি আমি নয়।

মহড়া। ওহে গিরি, গা তোল হে, উমা এলেন হিমালয়।

সওয়ারি। উঠ দুর্গা দুর্গা বলে, দুর্গা কর কোলে,
মুখে বল জয় জয় দুর্গা জয়।

খাদ। কন্যা পুত্র প্রতি বাৎসল্য তায় তাচ্ছিল্য করা নয়।

২ ঝুকা। আঁচল ধরে তারা বলে ছি মা কি মা, মাগো,
ওমা মা বাপের কি এমনি ধারা।

২ মেল্‌তা। গিরি তুমি যে অগতি বুঝে না পার্ব্বতী,
প্রসূতীর অখ্যাতি জগন্ময়।

অন্তরা। মা হওয়া যত জ্বালা যাদের মা বলবার আছে তারাই জানে।
তিলেক না হেরিয়ে মর্ম্মে ব্যথা পাই কর্ম্মসূত্রে সদা স্নেহে টানে।

Of Kabi-poetry before 1760, not much is known. Only a few names stand out of the general obscurity; but with regard to these names hardly any detail is known. The earliest, if not the most illustrious, Kabiwala of whom we have any record is one Goñjlā Guñi. In the issue of the *Saṁbād Prabhākar*[2] already referred to, Īśvar Gupta tells us that Goñjlā flourished "about 140 or 150 years" before his own time and this would place the

Goñjlā Guñi the earliest known Kabiwala.

[1] *Prāchīn Kabi-saṁgraha*, pp. 4-5; *Saṁbād Prabhākar*, Kārtik 1261, p. 4.

[2] *Saṁbād Prabhākar*, Agrahāyaṇ 1, 1261. I do not know on what evidence Nanda and Raghu have been placed by Dinesh Chandra Sen (*Baṅga Bhāṣā O Sāhitya*, 2nd Ed., p. 607) in the 11th century.

poet as early as the beginning of the 18th century. Of this Kabiwala however, we know nothing except that he formed a party of professional songsters (*kabir dal*) who used to sing in "the house of the rich" and that he had three disciples who in later times became famous Kabiwalas; but we have no evidence to ascertain whether he was the originator of this form of singing or (which is more probable) whether he had his predecessors in the line from whom he inherited his art. Of his composition, only one or two fragments have been rescued from oblivion by the indefatigable editor of the *Prabhākar*,[1] from which we quote this curious literary specimen

এস এস চাঁদ্‌বদনি।
এ রসে নিরসো কোরো না ধনি॥
তোমাতে আমাতে একই অঙ্গ,
তুমি কমলিনী, আমি সে ভৃঙ্গ,
অনুমানে বুঝি আমি সে ভুজঙ্গ,
তুমি আমার তায় রতন মণি॥
তোমাতে আমাতে একই কায়া,
আমি দেহ প্রাণ তুমি লো ছায়া,
আমি মহাপ্রাণী তুমি লো মায়া,
মনে মনে ভেবে দেখ আপনি॥

It will be noticed that both in theme and style these songs, if they are genuine, are more of the nature of the *tappā*; and we are told that in those days, such songs used to be sung, after the fashion of *tappās*, beginning with

[1] Also quoted in *Prāchīn Kabi-saṁgraha*, p. 127-8; *Gupta-ratnoddhār*, p. 205. The last four lines are omitted in *Baṅga Sāhitya Parichay*, vol. ii, p. 1551.

Also a little fragment

প্রাণ তোরে হেরিয়ে দুখো দূরে গেল মোর।
বিরহ-অনলো হইলো শীতলো, জুড়ালো প্রাণো চকোর॥

the *mahaḷā* and then proceeding to the *chiṭāu* and *antarā*; while in later times singing used to begin, as already indicated, with the *chiṭāu*. From these little fragments, however, nothing definite can be inferred with regard to the nature and history of Kabi-poetry of this period.

Three disciples of Goñjlā

The three disciples of Goñjlā alluded to above were Lālu Nandalāl, Raghunāth Dās and Rāmjī Dās. Their dates are unknown but they must have been living considerably later than the middle of the 18th century; for Haru Ṭhākur (born about 1738) was a disciple of Raghu while Nityānanda-dās Bairāgī (born about 1717) acknowledged Lālu Nandalāl, if not Rāmjī also, as his master.[1] Raghu had two other great disciples, who in later times earned much poetic fame, in Rāsu and Nṛsiṅha. Rāmjī, on the other hand, found a worthy disciple in Bhabānī Baṇik[2] who in his turn was the early patron and instructor of Rām Basu[3] considerably junior to most of these Kabiwalas.

and the poetical inter-relation between the earlier Kabiwalas.

These are the names of the earlier group of Kabiwalas. It will be noticed however that there is a sort of inter-relation between the earlier Kabiwalas and all of them

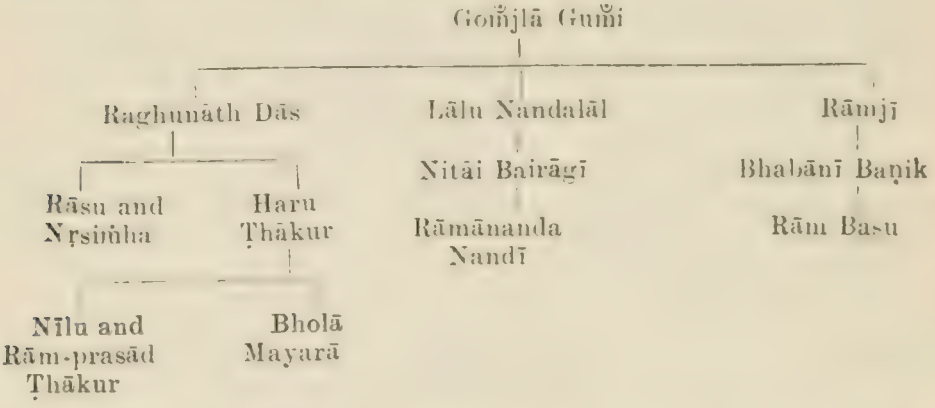
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[1] *Saṁbād Prabhākar*, Agrahāyaṇ 1261, p. 5; but one of the songs attributed to Nitāi by Īśvar Gupta as well as by later collectors (*Kabiwālāiger Gīt*, p. 116; *Gupta-ratnoddhār*, p. 184) bears the *bhaṇitā* of Ramjī Dās, which fact would probably indicate, if the attribution to Nitāi is correct, that Rāmjī and not Lālu Nandalāl was Nitāi's *Guru*. Īśvar Gupta speaks of Lālu Nandalāl as having flourished roughly eighty years before his own time. This rough reckoning would put Nandalāl in the latter part of the 18th century. 11th century, however (p. 341, foot note 2), is too absurd a date for Nanda or Raghu. Opinion on this point vary, but Īśvar Gupta's seems to be more reliable than later unauthenticated conjectures. And what is given above is all that can be gathered from such reliable sources.

[2] *Saṁbād Prabhākar loc. cit.*

[3] *Ibid*, Āśvin, 1261, p. 2.

derived their poetical origin from Goñjlā Guñi. The poetical relationship may be thus indicated :



During the time of Goñjlā Guñi and his three disciples, we have no record of the existence of 'rival parties' or of any 'poetical combats' which obtained so much in later times and which was indeed an essential characteristic of this form of entertainment. It was in the next generation that we hear for the first time of rivalries and oppositions between Nitāi Dās and Bhabānī, between Haru Ṭhākur and Kṛṣṇa Chandra Charmakār (Keṣṭā Muchi), between young Rām Basu and Haru Ṭhākur who must have been an old man at this time, as Rām Basu's 'reply' at one of these fights seem to imply.[1]

Lālu Nandalāl.

Of Lālu Nandalāl's composition Īśvar Gupta has given only one specimen which deserves to be quoted.[2]

হলো এই সুখোলাভো পীরিতে।
চিরদিন গেল কাঁদিতে॥
হয়েছে না হবে কলঙ্ক আমার গিয়েছে না যাবে কুল।
ডুবেছি না ডুব দেখি পাতালো কত দূর।

[1] It runs thus : ঠাকুর বাঁচবে না আর বিস্তর দিন।
তোমার চক্রে ধরেছে পোকা স্বর্ণরেখা অতি ক্ষীণ।

[2] *Saṁbād Prabhākar, loc. cit.*

শেষে এই হোলো কাণ্ডারি পালালো তরণী লাগিলো ভাসিতে ॥
ধনোপ্রাণো মনো যৌবনো দিয়ে শরণো লইলাম যার
তবু তার মন পাওয়া সখি আমারে হোলো ভার ।
না পুরিলো সাধো, উদয়ে বিচ্ছেদো, মিছে পরিবাদো জগতে ॥

Raghunāth Dās.

Of Raghu-nāth no trustworthy account remains. Some say that he was a sat-śūdra while others think that he was a blacksmith by caste.[1] According to a third view he was a weaver.[2] Salkiā and Guptipāḍā, in turns, have been noted as the place where he lived. Of his composition it is difficult to say anything definite; for although two or three fragments have come down to us, containing his own *bhaṇitā* or signature, it is not perfectly clear that these songs were really of his own composition. The tradition is

His relation to Haru Ṭhākur.

current that Haru, during his early years of pupilship under Raghu, used to get his productions corrected by his master and that, out of gratitude, he used to attach to them his master's *bhaṇitā*.[3] There is nothing to discredit this tradition which relates to a phenomenon not rare or improbable in our literary history. The number of these songs, however, is limited[4] and all of them, rightly or wrongly, have been attributed to Haru Ṭhākur. It may be quite possible, however, that some of these songs were the genuine works of Raghu. But the disciple's

[1] *Baṅgabhāṣār Lekhak*, p. 380.

[2] *Nabyabhārat*, B.S. 1131, p. 600.

[3] *Ibid*, pp. 600-601; *Kabiyālādiger Gīt* (1862), p. 66; *Saṁbād Prabhākar*, *loc. cit.*

[4] Besides the one quoted here, two such songs are given in *Kabiyālādiger Gīt*, at pp. 73-75 and at pp. 91-93 in the collection of Haru Ṭhākur's songs. These are also similarly given as Haru's in *Saṁbād Prabhākar*, Pous, 1261.

gratitude seems to have got its own reward and to-day Haru Ṭhākur is supposed to be the author of all songs bearing Raghu's signature. The tradition alluded to, however, does not disallow the supposition that the revision of the master might have given an entirely new shape to the novice's composition, and as such, therefore, it is only in the fitness of things that the songs should go in the name of the master. It would be difficult to dogmatise in the absence of evidence ; but these songs betray an elaborate structure and exuberance of fancy which some may connect with the early work of an ambitious youngster but which, on the other hand, may be supposed to bear indications of the master-hand. There are three songs extant of this description, of which one is, rightly or wrongly, attributed to Raghu in *Baṅgabhāṣār Lekhak* and in *Prītigīti* without any mention of Haru. The song is this—

ধিক্ ধিক্ তার জীবন যৌবন।
এমন প্রেমের সাধ করে যেই জন, সে চাহে না আমি তার যোগাই মন॥
যেখানেতে না রহিল মানী জনার মান, সে কেমন অজ্ঞান তারে সঁপে প্রাণ
সেধে কেঁদে হয়ে গেছে কলঙ্ক ভাজন।
একি প্রণয়ের রীতি সই শুনেছ এমন, কেহ সুখে থাকে
কেহ দুঃখে জ্বালাতন।
শয়নে স্বপনে মনে যে যারে ধেয়ায় সে জন তাহায় ফিরে নাহি চায়,
তথাপি না পারে তারে হতে বিস্মরণ॥
সখি, পিরীতি পরম ধন জগতের সার, সুজনে কুজনে হলে হয় ছারখার।
সামান্য খেদের কথা একি প্রাণসই, কারেই বা কই, প্রাণে মরে রই,
ঘরে পরে আরো তাহে করয়ে লাঞ্ছন।
যারে ভাবি আপন সই, তার এ বোধ নাই, এমন প্রেমের মুখে
তারো মুখে ছাই।
হেন অরণ্য রোদনে ফল আছে কি, এ হতে সুখী একা যে থাকি
ধরে বেঁধে করা কিনা প্রেম উপার্জ্জন॥

যার স্বভাব লম্পট সই তার কি এ বোধ আছে
কি করিবে তব প্রেম অনুরোধ,
অতি দৃঢ় উভয়েতে হওয়া এ কেমন এ হেন মিলন না দেখি কখন,
রঘু বলে কোথা মিলে দুজনে সুজন।

Ramji Dās.

Of the last disciple of Gonjlā, Rāmjī Dās, nothing absolutely is known except that Bhabānī Banik (as well as Nitāi Dās) was his disciple; and no work of his has survived. Only one song, however, which is often attributed to Nitāi,[1] bears the *bhanitā* of Rāmjī Dās. It is in no way very remarkable except for its ingenuity and fancifulness.

Keṣṭā Muchi (Kṛṣṇa Chandra Charmakār).

We hear also Keṣṭā Muchi who remained outside this group but who belonged to this generation, as a very popular songster much sought after and respected, although obviously he was a shoemaker by caste. Even later on Haru Ṭhākur, himself a Brāhman, did not disdain to cross swords with him; but we are told that Haru Ṭhākur, at that time a young man probably, had the worse luck of the duel. It is a pity we do not know much of this mysterious figure. Inspite of all his efforts Īśvar Gupta could not get hold of more than one incomplete fragment of this old *ostād*, itself not a very good specimen[2]

হরি, কে বুঝে তোমার এ লীলে।
ভাল প্রেম করিলে॥
হইলে ভূপতি, কুবুজা যুবতী পাইয়ে শ্রীপতি
শ্রীমতী রাধারে রহিলে ভুলে।

[1] *Vide ante* p. 343, foot note 1. It begins with

সে কেন রাধারে কলঙ্কিণী করে রাখিলে।
বুঝিতে নারি সখি শ্যামের এ লীলে।

The song, too long for quotation will be found in *Gupta-ratnoddhār*, p. 184; *Kabiyālādiger Gīt*, p. 116.

[2] *Saṁbād Prabhākar*, Agrahāyaṇ, *loc. cit.*

শ্যাম সেজেছ হে বেশ, ওহে হৃষীকেশ,
রাখালের বেশ এখন কোথায় লুকালে।
মাতুলো বধিলে, প্রতুলো করিলে, গোপ গোপীকুলে,
গোকুলে অকুলে ভাসায়ে দিলে॥

These earlier metrical essays of the Kabiwalas, to judge from the few extant fragments, are thus not so crude as to be comtemptuously set aside ; but they are at the same time not so creditable in view of the fact that simultaneously, in another sphere, Bhārat Chandra was charming his royal patron with his art and his music, Durgāprasād was painting his picturesque description of the descent of the sacred river, Rāmeśvara was narrating his exceedingly human and homely account of Śiba Gaurī, and Rām-prasād was pouring out his soul in devotional ecstasy.

Kabi-song of the next generation (about or after 1760 to 1830).

In the effusions of the next generation we find better quality and a greater elaboration of Kabi-poetry. Simultaneously with a certain advance in the artistic direction, both in form and substance, we hear of systematic organisation of "parties" (*kabir dal*) and "poetical combats" (*kabi-yuddha* or *kabir-laḍāi*) which no doubt thrilled many a heart in days of yore but with which the literary historian has no practical concern except in so far as this circumstance affected the making of these songs and their poetical quality. Into the details of these poetical 'flytings,' comparatively uninspiring to a modern reader, it is not necessary for our purpose to enter. We need not narrate at length how Bhabānī Baṇik, until reinforced by Rām Basu, must have found a tough opponent in Nitāi Bairāgī[1] ; how unlucky Haru Ṭhākur, an old veteran and winner of hundred "fights" as he was, had the humiliation of being worsted not only

Organisation of "parties" and poetical combats.

[1] *Saṁbād Prabhākar*, Agrahāyaṇ, 1261, p. 6.

Keṣṭā Muchi but also by a youngling like Rām Basu [1] ; or how Antony was attacked by Ṭhākur Simha but paid him back in his own coin.[2] But this necessity of poetical rivalry, in which quick and witty retort played a great part, and this contamination of popular applause which readily followed such cheap display of ingenuity went a long way in debasing the quality of Kabi-poetry until these poetical extemporisations degenerated into something even worse than the wayside verses that are hawked about and sold for a penny. The later Kabiwalas fell into the vital error of imagining that the sole end of poetical existence consisted in abusing and throwing mud at each other. Over the dull obscenities into which they entered it is better for the critic to keep silence ; but we may here recall, for illustration, one or two instances of these retorts, although they do not always display either sobriety or good taste. At a certain sitting at the Sobhabazar Palace the parties of Rām Basu, then an old veteran, and of Nīlu Ṭhākur (a disciple of Rām Basu's old rival Haru Ṭhākur) met. Nīlu was dead but Rām-prasād Ṭhākur was then the leader of the party. Rām-prasād began the attack

An instance of a witty retort quoted.

নাইক রাম বোসের এখন সেকেলে পৌরোষ

এখন দল করে হয়েছেন রাম বোস—রামকামারের * * ॥

But immediately Rām Basu retorted

তেম্‌নি এই নীলুর দলে রামপ্রসাদ একটীন্‌।

যেমন ঢাকের পীটে বাঁয়া থাকে বাজেনাক একটি দিন ॥

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[1] *Nabyabhārat*, 1311, pp. 477-79

[2] Rām-gati Nyāyaratna, *Bangabhāṣā O Sāhitya bisayak Prastāb*, 3rd Ed. (1317), p. 196, footnote, quoted in *Bangabhāṣā O Sāhitya* at pp. 598-9. For notice of a fight between Antony and Bholā, see *Bhāratī*, 1303 p. 59 et seq.

যেমন রাতভিখারীর ধামা বওয়া থাকে একজন,
হরি নাম বলেনা মুখে পেছু থেকে চাল কুড়ুতে মন,
কর্ম্মে অকর্ম্মা তেম্‌নি ঐ রামপ্রসাদ শর্ম্মা
মন কাজের কাজী ঠাটের বাজী—(ভাই রে) !
ঠিক যেন ধোপার বিশকর্ম্মা,
যেমন বিদ্যেশূন্য বিদ্যেভূষণ, সিদ্ধিরস্তু বস্তুহীন ॥
নীলমণি মলে, নীলমণি দলে ঢুক্‌লে সিংভাঙ্গা এঁড়ে বাছুরের পালে
যেমন নবাব মলে নবাব হলো উজীরালি আড়াই দিন।
যেমন মেগের কাছে পেগের বড়াই ঘরে করে জাঁক,
দুনিয়ার কর্ম্মেতে কুড়ে, ভোজনে দেড়ে, বচনে পুড়িয়ে করেন খাক্ ॥
তেম্‌নি শ্রীছাঁদ, এই পেটকো মুলুকচাঁদ, তরেন রামপ্রসাদ, ধরে কৃষ্ণপ্রসাদ
যেমন জন্মে কভু হাত পোরে না দোলে লবেদার আস্তীন্ ॥

It is useless to multiply instances [1] and most of them do not bear quotation ; but the instance quoted, itself moderate enough in tone, will furnish a hint as to the excess to which the Kabi-fightings were carried. Once asked ironically by Ṭhākur Siṁha

বল হে আণ্টুনি আমি একটি কথা জান্‌তে চাই,
এসে এ দেশে এ বেশে তোমার গায়ে কেন কুর্ত্তি নাই ॥

Antony retorted in abusive language

এই বাঙ্গালায় বাঙ্গালীর বেশে আনন্দে আছি।
হয়ে ঠাক্‌রে সিংহের বাপের জামাই কুর্ত্তি টুপি ছেড়েছি ॥

While tearing his adversary to pieces, the Kabiwala incidentally tore to pieces all form, style or decency. The muses, who love solitude and devotional worship, could not be expected to stay at leisure and comfort amid the noise and tumult of this uproarious poetry.

[1] For Rām Basu's attack on Nilu and Rām-prasād on another occasion, see *Prāchīnkabi-saṁgraha*, p. 149, and his attack on Bholā

The principal Kabiwalas of this group.

But Rāsu Nṛsiṁha, Haru Ṭhākur, Nitāi Bairāgī and Rām Basu (we hear little of Bhabānī Baṇik [1] the fame of his disciple, Rām Basu, having overshadowed his own reputation), who were the great champions of this generation of Kabi-poetry, were not mere versifiers and their productions were not wholly destitute of poetic merit. Of these Rāsu and Nṛsiṁha come earliest in chronology.

Rāsu (1734-1807) and Nṛsiṁha (1738-1809?)

The mysterious double personality of Rāsu and Nṛsiṁha the two brothers who lived and worked together, is a fascinating figure of this group of Kabiwalas. They were so united in their work, which bear their *bhaṇitā* in joint names that it is difficult and inequitable to separate them. It has been plausibly premised [2] that one of them was the poet, the other

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Mayarā who was a disciple of Haru Ṭhākur. *Ibid* p. 148. See also Anāth Kṛṣṇa Deb, *Baṅger Kabitā*, pp. 317-325; *Bhāratī*, *loc. cit.* etc.

[1] Of Bhabānī Baṇik who lived somewhere in Bagbazar, Calcutta, and had some reputation as a Kabiwala in his time, we practically know nothing except what Īśvar Gupta tells us in the *Saṁbād Prabhākar*, Pous, 1261. This is what he says ভবানে বেণে ও নীলুঠাকুর ভোলা ময়রা প্রভৃতি প্রভৃতি প্রথমে হরুঠাকুরের দলে ছিল দিত। পরে দোহার অর্থাৎ গায়কের পদে নিযুক্ত হন। এইরূপে কিছু দিন গত করিয়া সকলে ভিন্ন ভিন্ন রূপে স্ব স্ব নামে দল স্থাপন করিলেন। তৎকালে হরু সকলকেই গীত ও সুর প্রদান করিতেন। অতি অল্প দিবস পরেই ভবানে বেণে রামজির অনুগত হইয়া তাহারই নিকট গীত লইতে আরম্ভ করিল, সর্ব্বশেষে রামবসুর আশ্রিত হইয়া সমূহ সুখ্যাতি সংগ্রহ করিল। In the anthology of Bengali love-songs entitled *Pīṭigīti* (ed. Abināś Chandra Ghoṣ), three or four songs are attributed to Bhabānī Baṇik at pp 613, 665, 809, 878-79. These songs however, although sung by Bhabāni Baṇik in his party, are not of his own composition but have been attributed to Rām Basu or Haru Ṭhākur in all other collections or anthologies. (See *Prāchīn-Kabi-saṁgraha*, pp. 18-20, 30, 60, 80) Of Bhabānī's own composition, nothing has survived.

[2] *Nabyabhārat*, 1311, p. 647.

composed music : but on this point, it is not possible to make any definite statement. Even Īśvar Gupta [1] says, উক্ত উভয় সহোদরের মধ্যে কোন ব্যক্তি গীত ও সুর রচনায় নিপুণ ছিলেন তদ্বিষয়ে আমরা কিছুই জানিতে পারি নাই।

Rāsu and Nṛsiṁha, though not of obscure origin like the greater number of their fellow-poets, yet afford no exception to the general rule in the obscurity that surrounds their lives. Rāsu was born in 1734 (1141 B.S.) and Nṛsiṁha in 1738 (1144 B.S.) at Gondalpāḍā near French Chandannagar of a good Kāyastha family.[2] Their father, Ānandīnāth Rāy was a clerk in the military department of the French Government and earned a good deal besides his nominal salary. The two boys were sent to the local village-school and then to their maternal uncle's house at Chinsurah where the missionaries had established a Bengali School (before May's school founded in 1814). They did not do much at school and so ultimately were sent back to their father after a year. Ānandīnāth died soon after this, and thus left to themselves, the boys had freedom enough to live as they liked. They attached themselves to the party of Raghunāth the Kabiwala who was the master of Haru Ṭhākur ; but, having gained some knowledge of the art they formed a party of their own which soon became popular. They were greatly patronised by Indranārāyaṇ Chaudhurī, Dewan of the French Government ; and Chandannagar soon became a centre of Kabi-song through their influence. Rāsu died at the good old age of seventy-two or seventy-three in 1807 ; Nṛsiṁha survived him for a few years more.

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[1] *Saṁbād Prabhākar*, Māgh 1261, quoted in *Janma-bhūmī*, 1302, p. 227.

[2] These biographical details are taken from *Saṁbād Prabhākar*, *loc. cit.*; *Nabyabhārat*, 1311, p. 645 et seq.; *Kabiyālādiger Gīt*, pp. 97-98 ; *Janma-bhūmī loc. cit.* etc.

Of Rāsu and Nṛsiṁha's composition, only six songs have come down to us and the number is obviously too small [1] and the songs themselves too inadequate to allow us to form a just estimate of their powers. These songs all relate to *sakhī-saṁbād* and *biraha* but we are not sure whether they composed songs on other themes. Tradition says that these were the two themes in which Rāsu and Nṛsiṁha excelled and the extant songs inspite of their small bulk certainly corroborate this tradition. Here is one of the much-praised pieces on *sakhī-saṁbād*, which inspite of its fanciful note, is not wholly destitute of merit.

Their songs on *sakhī-saṁbād* and *biraha*.

প্রাণনাথো মোরো সেজেছেন্ শঙ্করো
দেখসিয়ে প্রিয়ে ললিতে।
অপরূপো দরশনো আজু প্রভাতে।
বুঝি কারো কাছে রজনী জেগেছে
নয়ন লেগেছে ঢুলিতে॥
পার্ব্বতীনাথেরো অর্দ্ধ শশধরো
সবিতা অর্দ্ধ কপালেতে।
আমারো নাগরো সেজেছেন সুন্দরো
চন্দন সিন্দূর ভালেতে॥
হায়! মথনেরো বিষো ভখিয়ে মহেশো
নীল কণ্ঠদেশে নিশানা।
নীলকণ্ঠ নাম অতি অনুপাম
জগতে রয়েছে ঘোষণা॥

[1] Only six poems in all is to be found in all the existing books of collection and all these songs are noteworthy.

আমার নাগরো গিয়েছিলেন্ কারো
কলঙ্ক-সাগরো মথিতে।
ফুরায়ে মন্থনো এনেছেন্ নিশানো
আঁখির অঞ্জন গলেতে॥

It will be noticed that in this poem as well as in other poems on the same theme, the characteristic feature lies in its power of gentle banter and soft sarcasm which, though not rare in other Kabiwalas, was wielded with great effect by Rāsu and Nṛsiṁha. In all these poems we have, on the one hand, the extreme simplicity of natural emotion befitting a *mugdhā* heroine, on the other, there is a sense of pride and self-esteem, which imparts a touch of malicious egoism to these passionate songs. Alluding to Kubjā, the Sakhī says—

Their characteristic quality.

শ্যাম, রূপেরো বিচারো যদি মনে করো
মজেছ যাহার কারণে।
ওহে লক্ষ কুবুজারো রূপেরো ভাণ্ডারো
শ্রীমতী রাধারো চরণে॥.....
শ্যাম, ত্যজিলে শ্রীমতী তাহাতে কি ক্ষতি
যুবতী সকলি সহিলো।
ভুজঙ্গ-মাণিকো হোরে নিলো ভেকো
মরমে এ দুখো রহিলো॥
শ্যাম, প্রদীপেরো আলো প্রকাশ পাইলো
চন্দ্রমা লুকালো গগনে।
ওহে গোখুরের জলো জগতো ব্যাপিলো
সাগর শুকালো তপনে॥

Or take another

শ্যাম, কার ভাবে ভুলে, কহ কোথা ছিলে
মোজেছিলে কার প্রেমেতে।

প্রভাতে কেমনে আইলে এ স্থানে
নিলাজ বদনো দেখাতে ॥.....
শ্যাম, শরমে কি করে বলিহে তোমারে
শ্রীমতী রাধার কথাটি।
এবারে মাধবে যে আনি মিলাবে
সে খাবে রাধার মাথাটি ॥
দিয়ে পদ দুটি মাড়াবে যে মাটি
শ্রীমতী তো সেটি ছোঁবে না।
তুলিয়ে সে মাটি দিবে ছড়া ঝাঁটি
শ্রীরাধার এটি কট্‌কেনা ॥

In their *biraha* songs, again, there is no effeminate indulgence of self-pity or straining after racy perversity but they are simple, direct and dignified and have considerable restraint of thought and language. The poets ask

কহ সখি কিছু প্রেমেরি কথা।
ঘুচাও আমার মনের ব্যথা ॥
করিলে শ্রবণো হয় দিব্য জ্ঞানো
হেন প্রেমধনো উপজে কোথা ॥
আমি রসিকেরো স্থানে পেয়েছি সন্ধানো
তুমি নাকি জানো প্রেমবারতা।
আমি এসেছি বিবাগে, মনের বিরাগে
প্রীতি-প্রয়াগে মুড়াব মাথা ॥

Speaking of the ordinary idea of love they say

সখি এ সকল প্রেম প্রেম নয়।
ইহাতে মজিয়ে নাহি সুখেরো উদয় ॥
সুহৃদ-ভঞ্জনো লোক-গঞ্জনো কলঙ্ক-ভাজনো হতে হয় ॥.....
অমিয় তেজে গরলে মোজে উপজে কি সুখো।
কলঙ্ক ঘোষণা জগতে, মরণো হতে অধিকো ॥.....

ত্যজিয়ে এ সুধারসো কেন বিষ ভখিবো, কলুষকূপে ডুবিব।
থাকিতে নয়নো অন্ধ যেই জনো, পেয়ে প্রেমধনো সে হারায়॥

and the ways of such a lover are ironically reproached

তোমার চরিত, পথিক যেমত
হোয়ে শ্রান্তিযুত বিশ্রাম করে।
শ্রান্তি দূর হলে, যায় সেই চোলে
পুন নাহি চায় ফিরে॥

If one can judge from the exceedingly small mass of poems of Rāsu and Nṛsiṁha, which has been preserved but which is too inadequate to represent their talents in full, one would still hesitate to set aside these little things as mere melodious trifles or deny that their authors possessed a considerable share of the irresistible song-gift. Their love-songs may lack, as the love-songs of most of the Kabiwalas do, novelty, polish or depth; but they have a simple directness and an untutored nobility which is not common enough among contemporary songsters.

Haru Ṭhākur, however, the next great Kabiwala, displays a variety and abundance of poetical accomplishment, and his work has fortunately come down to us in a comparatively large bulk. Hare Kṛṣṇa Dīrghāḍī or Dīrghāṅgī, popularly styled Haru Ṭhākur, the adjunct Ṭhākur having been added as a mark of respect, was a Brāhmaṇ among Kabiwalas of generally inferior caste. He was born at Simla, Calcutta, in 1738 (1145 B.S.).[1]

Haru Ṭhākur. 1738-1812.

[1] Writing in 1854, Īśvar Gupta says that Haru died at the age of 75, "more than forty years" before his own time. This would indicate that the dates of Haru's birth and death would be roughly 1739 and 1814 respectively.

His father, Kalyāṇchandra [1] Dīrghāṅgī sent his son to the *pāṭhśālā* of one Bhairab-chandra Sarkār but his means were not sufficient to give his son a good education nor did the son seem eager enough to profit by his studies; for from his early years Haru betrayed a greater attachment to musical and poetical composition than to monotonous book-learning. When he was a mere boy, eleven years old, his father died and Haru at once gave up his books and began an irregular life of indolent pleasure for some years. But he had a natural gift of song and his irregular life had brought him into contact with a group of bohemians whom he gathered together and formed an amateur Kabi-party (*sakher dal*) under the acknowledged guidance of the weaver-poet Raghunāth in whose company Haru had obtained his preliminary training. It is through Raghunāth that Haru first began to be widely known and appreciated, and for Raghu, Haru Ṭhākur always cherished a deep feeling of respect and gratitude, a fact which is amply indicated by his generously putting his master's *bhaṇitā* to some of his own compositions. The story is told how Haru got fame and recognition for the first time by singing at the palace of Rājā Nabakṛṣṇa, a great patron of letters of that time, and how the delighted Rājā having awarded him with a pair of shawls, the proud young man felt insulted at being treated like a needy professional Kabiwala and walked away throwing the royal gift on the head of his own *dhuli* (drummer). The Rājā however was a man of taste and discernment and had enough sense of humour to appreciate the uncommon behaviour of the young poet; and it was through the Rājā's advice and patronage, obtained so queerly, that Haru subsequently formed a professional party *(peśādāri dal)* although he

[1] Called Kalicharaṇ in *Baṅgabhāṣār Lekhak*, vol. i, 367; in *Gupta-ratnoddhār*, p. 10; in *Kabiyālā liyer Gīt*, p. 64.

always seemed averse to earning money by such a prostitution of his talents. Henceforth Kabi-song became his profession and his fame spread far and wide. He died at the age of 74 in 1812.[1]

It is to be regretted that neither the songs of Haru Ṭhākur nor that of his great rival Rām Basu have been collected or critically edited. Īśvar Gupta gave us (1854) for the first time the largest collection of 45 songs of Haru Ṭhākur (though some of them are mere fragments) on the themes of *sakhī-saṁbād* and *biraha*. The *Kabioyālādiger Gīt Saṁgraha* (1862) merely reproduces 27 of these with the single addition of new piece.[2] The *Gupta-ratnoddhār* (1894) again, the other anthology of Kabi-songs, gives us only 30 pieces all taken from Īśvar Gupta's collections. In *Prāchīn Kabi-saṁgraha* (1877), the number of Haru Ṭhākur's songs is very limited, only 13 being given under his name; but of these 13 songs, five or six at least have been unanimously attributed in other collections to Rām Basu and one, so attributed to Rāsu and Nṛsiṁha,[3] is rightly or wrongly placed under Haru Ṭhākur's name. In *Prītigīti*, the most extensive modern anthology of Bengali love-poems, there are 30 songs attributed to Haru Ṭhākur but all of them (except two[4] which are apparently new but which are however mere fragments and do not add much to Haru's reputation)

No complete collection or critical edition of his songs yet published.

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[1] *Nabyabhārat*, 1311, p. 605. But, according to *Kabioyālādiger Gīt*, p. 66 and *Sāhitya Parisat Patrikā*, 1302, p. 384, following Īśvar Gupta (*Prabhākar*, Pous, 1261) at the age of 75.

[2] At p. 134. But it is sometimes attributed to Rām Basu.

[3] At p. 87-79.

[4] At p. 119 and p. 397.

are to be found in other collections and one of these [1] is universally attributed in other collections to Rām Basu and one, which is Haru's, is wrongly attributed to Bhabānī Baṇik.[2] Again, much uncertainty still remains, in spite of these efforts, as to the question of authorship of many of these songs, for there is absolutely no means for determining with absolute certainty the authorship of many a song, variously attributed to various poets. What is true of Haru Ṭhākur is true of every other Kabiwala; and this one instance would sufficiently illustrate the nature and extent of the data one has got to handle in dealing with Kabi-poetry.

But a poor collection of 45 songs—all of them not of the best and some of them mere fragments—is but a sadly diminished and dwindled legacy of the extraordinary reputation which Haru Ṭhākur has always enjoyed as one of the greatest of the Kabiwalas.

His versatility.

The songs which have come down to us mostly relate to either of the two themes of *biraha* and *sakhī-saṁbād*; but if we are to rely upon the testimony of Īśvar Gupta who wrote only forty years after Haru Ṭhākur's death, we must admit that the great Kabiwala could write with equal facility and power upon all the other recognised themes such as *āgamanī, bhabānī biṣayak, lahar and khemṭā*. On the first two of these divisions not a single composition of Haru has survived. Īśvar Gupta again tells us that Haru could compose best on the themes of

His *lahar* and *khemṭā* songs: testimony of Īśvar Gupta.

[1] At p. 808.

[2] At p. 613. The *Saṅgīt-sār-saṁgraha* and *Bāṅgālīr Gān* etc. give a selecti n of Kabi-songs; but they are later and inferior collections apparently reproducing what is given in other special collections and therefore are not mentioned here.

lahar[1] and *kheuḍ*, but these songs, although much praised in their time for their ingenuity and verbal music, were hopelessly vitiated by bad taste and unredeemed coarseness and can be dismissed with the just though severe comments of Īśvar Gupta himself which deserves quotation here; কিন্তু দুঃখের বিষয় এই যে অতি জঘন্য অতি ঘৃণিত অতি অশ্রাব্য অবাচ্য শব্দে পূরিত হইত, একারণ তাহা কোন প্রকারেই প্রকাশ করা বিধেয় নহে। যখন তাহার নাম করিতে হইলেই রাম বলিয়া ঘাম নির্গত করিতে হয়, ভূত প্রেত প্রভৃতি কর্ণে হস্ত দিয়া কোথায় প্রস্থান করে, তখন আমরা কি প্রকারে তাহা পত্রস্থ করিতে পারি। পূর্ব্বকার অতি প্রধান ২ মহিমান্বিত অর্থাৎ মহারাজ কৃষ্ণচন্দ্র রায় বাহাদুর, নবকৃষ্ণ বাহাদুর প্রভৃতি উচ্চ লোকেরা এবম্ভূত অদ্ভুত সকার বকারে সন্তুষ্ট হইতেন, আমোদের পরিসীমা থাকিত না। জ্ঞাতি, কুটুম্ব, সজন, সজ্জন, পরিজনে পরিবেষ্টিত হইয়া গদগদচিত্তে শ্রবণ করিতেন।[2] It is no wonder, therefore, that these songs have all perished; and time, the exorable judge and destroyer, has preserved to us only those songs on *biraha* and *sakhī-sambād* for

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[1] If *Kheuḍ* is unquotable, *lahar* is nearly so. As the modern reader has no idea of what it is like we give here a specimen of a moderate type—

আমি মগধপতি জরাসন্ধ বটি হে কংসেরি শ্বশুর।
ওহে কংসের ভাগ্নে কৃষ্ণ তুমি নাতি আমার সম্বন্ধ মধুর॥
তোমার সঙ্গী দুটি পরিপাটী নামে ভীমার্জ্জুন,
কৃষ্ণ ভাল করে আজ আমারে দাও উহাদের পরিচয়।
উহার কোন্‌টি তোমার পিস্‌তুতো ভাই, কোন্‌টি ভগ্নিপতি হয়॥
ভদ্রঘরের মেয়ে বটে সুভদ্রার বুদ্ধি ভাল নয়,
ওহে ভাইকে পতি করতে গেলে তোমার মত কে আর হয়?

It hardly requires any comment. This and *Kheuḍ* represents a phase of the Kabi-movement over which the critic had better keep silence.

[2] *Sambād Prabhākar*, Pous, 1, 1261, pp. 5-6.

which Haru Ṭhākur had been deservedly famous and which indicate, even in the fragmentary and inadequate specimens which have come down, considerable poetic power, which cannot be, as it often is, summarily damned.

Leaving aside the uncritical encomiums of reactionary enthusiasts, on the one hand, and undue undervaluing by an equally enthusiastic school of 'modern' critics, on the other, we must admit that even the obviously inadequate and insufficient specimens of Haru Ṭhākur's workmanship which have survived indicate that he had, even judged by strict standard, sufficient intelligence and poetic power, in larger or smaller, in clearer or more clouded shape, of writing songs and not mere congeries of verses. Considering the time and the circumstances, this must not be regarded as a very poor or mean praise. That there are obvious and not inconsiderable defects is true. The subject is often trite, the thought a hackneyed or insignificant one; the poet lacks perfect expression and sustained utterance, is defective in rhyme or metre or other technical qualities and has one of the superior charm and grace of the greatest Baiṣṇab poets. But the indefinable yet unmistakable poetic touch is always there and nothing but superficial or wilfully capricious criticism will pooh-pooh its true poetic spirit or damn it with faint praise.

His poetic quality.

It is not possible within the limits of our plan to enter into details or, with the space at our disposal, to give extensive quotations which alone would bring out the beauty of Haru Ṭhākur's songs. But these songs are more or less justly included in the numerous anthologies of Bengali poetry and many of them are known by heart to every one who knows Bengali poetry at all. The best songs of Haru Ṭhākur,

His songs on *sakhī-saṁbād*.

the merit of which it is impossible to underrate, more than justify themselves to any one who looks at poetry with just and catholic appreciation. To such a reader, সইরে, কই বিপিনবিহারী বিনোদ আমার এলনা[1] is not a trifle nor কদম্বতলে কেগো বংশী বাজায় nor সখিরে রসের অলসে গত দিবসেরো রজনীশেষে nor আমারে সখি ধরো ধরো ব্যথার ব্যথিত কে আছে আমারো nor আগে যদি প্রাণসখি জানিতাম nor কি কাজ আর ব্রজভুবনে nor many others. We have not space enough for lengthy quotations but we shall select here two specimens (other than those mentioned) from his *sakhī-saṁbād*.[2]

শ্যাম তিলেক দাঁড়াও
হেরি চিকণ কাল বরণ। শ্যাম তিলেক দাঁড়াও।
এ অধিনীর মনের মানস পুরাও॥
সাধ মম বহুদিনের, আজ পেয়েছি অঙ্গনে
চন্দ্রাননে হাসি হাসি বাঁশিটি বাজাও॥
নির্জনে এমন না পাব দরশন
যায় নিশি যাক্ জানুক গুরুজন।
তাহাতে নহি খেদিতো শুন ওহে ব্রজনাথো
ও বংশীরো গুণ কত বিশেষে শুনাও॥
শ্যাম, শুন শুন যাও কেন রাখহে বচন।
তোমার বাঁশির গান আমি করিব শ্রবণ॥
কোন রন্ধ্রে পুরে ধ্বনি কুলবতীর মন
কুল সহিতে হে করিলে হরণ।
কোন রন্ধ্রে পুরে ধ্বনি রাধায় কর উদাসিনী
সাক্ষাতে বাজাও শুনি আমার মাথা খাও॥

[1] Contains Haru Ṭhākur's master's (Raghu's) *bhaṇitā*: hence quoted as Raghu's in *Baṅga Sāhitya Parichay*, vol. ii, pp. 1548-49.

[2] *Saṁbād Prabhākar*, Pous, 1261; *Kabioyālādiger Gīt*, p. 88; *Gupta-ratnoddhār*, p. 60; *Saṅgīt-sār-saṁgraha*, p. 1038; also quoted in *Nabyabhārat*, 1131, p. 602.

The other is a fine piece but it is sometimes attributed to Rām Basu.[1]

একি অকস্মাৎ বজ্রে বজ্রাঘাত কে আনিলো রথ গোকুলে।
অক্রুর সহিতে কেন তুমি রথে, বুঝি মথুরাতে চলিলে॥
ইহাই কি তোমারি মনে ছিল হরি, ব্রজকুলনারী বধিলে।
বলনা কি বাদ সাধিলে॥
শ্যাম, ভেবে দেখ মনে তোমারি কারণে ব্রজাঙ্গনাগণ উদাসী
নাহি অন্য ভাবো শুন হে মাধবো তোমারি প্রেমের প্রয়াসী॥
শ্যাম, নিশাভাগ নিশি যথা বাজে বাঁশি তথা আসি গোপী সকলে।
কিসে হলেম দোষী তা তোমায় জিজ্ঞাসী এই দোষে কিহে ত্যজিলে॥
যদি চলিলে মুরারি তেজে ব্রজপুরী ব্রজনারী কোথা রেখে যাও।
জীবন উপায় বলে দাও॥
হে মধুসূদন, করি নিবেদন বদন তুলিয়ে কথা কও॥
শ্যাম, যাও মধুপুরী নিষেধ না করি থাক হরি যথা সুখ পাও।
একবার সহাস্যবদনে বঙ্কিমনয়নে ব্রজগোপীর পানে ফিরে চাও॥
জনমের মত শ্রীচরণ দুটি হেরি হে নয়নে শ্রীহরি
আর হেরিব না আশা করি।

Haru Ṭhākur is certainly at his best in these songs on *sakhī-saṁbād* and one, who does not incur the mishap of falling between the two schools already alluded to, will appreciate their charming quality. His *biraha* songs which at one time enjoyed and even to-day enjoys an enormous reputation and popularity are certainly inferior in quality as well as in bulk not only to his *sakhī-saṁbād* compositions but also to the *biraha* songs of his rival and

[1] So attributed in *Nabyabhārat*, 1311, p. 476 and *Janmabhūmī* 1303-04, p. 303: but in all other collections from Īśvar Gupta downwards, it is assigned to Haru Ṭhākur. There are slight differences of reading in various collections. In some anthologies, the lines beginning with যদি চলিলে মুরারি are taken as constituting a separate song.

contemporary Rām Basu. These songs do not call for detailed comment though some of them are not altogether destitute of merit. There is no peculiar charm or characteristic feature which distinguishes these songs from similar compositions of other Kabiwalas except perhaps the fact that there is a sense of disappointment,[1] of embittered feeling,[2] of sarcastic gloominess[3] in tone and temper. We will therefore close this account with one short piece which, if not characteristically representative, will illustrate sufficiently Haru Ṭhākur's style and manner.

His *biraha* songs.

পীরিতি নাহি গোপনে থাকে।
শুনলো স্বজনি বলি তোমাকে॥
শুনেছ কথনো জলন্ত আগুণো
বসনে বন্ধনো রাখে॥
প্রতিপদের চাঁদো হরিষে বিষাদো
নয়নে না দেখে উদয় লেখে।
দ্বিতীয়ের চাঁদো কিঞ্চিতো প্রকাশো
তৃতীয়ের চাঁদো জগতে দেখে॥

Nityānanda-dās Bairāgī, popularly called Nitāi or Nite Bairāgī, younger than Haru Ṭhākur but much older than Rām Basu, was one of the famous and popular Kabiwalas of his time; but his fame rested more upon his sweet and melodious singing than upon his poetical

Nitāi Bairāgī 1751–1821.

[1] See for instance the song 'এতো দুখো অপমানো সাধেরো পীরিতে প্রাণো' or 'ধিক্ ধিক্ তার জীবন যৌবন' (already quoted under Raghunāth) or 'তোমার আশাতে এ চারিজন মোর মনো প্রাণো শ্রবণো নয়ন॥'

[2] See for instance 'আর নারীরে করোনা প্রত্যয়' (sometimes attributed to Rām Basu), 'যার স্বভাব যা থাকে প্রাণনাথ তা কি ঘুচাতে কেহ পারে' or বুঝেছি মনেতে রমণীর প্রেম।

[3] See for instance ওহে বার বার আর কেন জ্বালাও আমায়। or এই সদা ভয় মনেতে বিচ্ছেদো বা ঘটে পীরিতে

composition. He was an expert singer rather than a good composer of words. Himself an unlettered man, he could hardly weave words into music; but one Gour Kabirāj, a native of Simla, Calcutta, and a brāhaman named Nabāi Ṭhākur used to frame songs for him by which he won so much reputation. Gour Kabirāj[1] excelled in *biraha* and *khemṭ* while Nabāi Ṭhākur had more versatile gifts, although he is credited with great excellence in his *sakhī-saṁbād*. It is difficult, however, to ascertain at this day what particular song was composed by this or that individual poet; and even half a century ago, Īśvar Gupta, no mean judge, who collected these songs only 33 years after Nitāi's death and had ampler materials than we now possess, confessed his inability to do so.[2] All songs, therefore, which were sung by his party now go by his name alone.

Nitāi was born at Chandan-nagar about 1751 (1158 B.S.)[3] in the house of one Kuñjadās Baiṣṇab and was brought up in Baiṣṇabism. Nothing however is known about the details of his life but his fame as a Kabiwala at one time spread far and wide over the prosperous cities and villages on the two sides of the Hoogly and we read graphic accounts of the eagerness with which people used to come from a great distance to witness the sensational Kabi-fights between Nitāi and Bhabānī Baṇik, once his great rival.[4]

[1] This Kabirāj also used to compose songs for other parties. Lakṣmīnārāyaṇ Jogi (Loke Jugi) and Nīlu Ṭhākur were among those whom he thus favoured. It has been already noted that one song which is often attributed to Nitāi bears the *bhaṇita* of Rāmjī. This may indicate, if the song itself is not Rāmjī's, that the latter was one of the poetical preceptors of Nitāi.

[2] In *Prachīn Kabi-saṁgraha*, however, two songs are given with direct attribution to Nabāi Ṭhākur.

[3] See *Saṁbād Prabhākar*, Agrahāyaṇ, 1, 1261.

[4] *Ibid*, *loc. cit.*

But his profession not only brought him fame, it also brought him money; and we are told that he made good use of his fortune by spending it in erecting an *Ākhḍā* at Chinsurah and a temple at Chandan-nagar where all the great religious festivals were held with pomp and splendour. In 1821,[1] while returning from the house of the Rājā of Kasimbazar where he had gone to sing during the Pūjā festival, he was attacked by illness which proved fatal and he died in the same year at the great age of seventy. He had three sons Jagatchandra, Rāmchandra and Premchandra each of whom inherited his father's profession, if not his talents, and formed Kabi-parties in later times; but no direct descendant of Nitāi is alive to-day.

Like Haru Ṭhākur whom Nitāi resembles so much in poetical character, Nitāi possessed not a small share of the gift of exquisite song-writing. He wrote chiefly on *sakhī saṁbād* and *biraha* but in both these he shows considerable power. We have already quoted one of his beautiful songs in which there is, if not the delicacy of artificial bloom and perfection, a strain of the real, the ineffable tone of poetry proper. Nitāi had none of Rām Basu's rhetorical tendency, finical nicety or straining after studied effects, but his songs possess not a little amount of unconscious freshness and beauty of tender sentiment and expression. Nitāi however, like most of his compeers, is a very unequal poet; spasmodic bursts of fine lines and couplets go hand in hand with insipid and hardly tolerable verses. Himself a Baiṣṇab Bairāgī he, among the Kabiwalas, could more successfully imitate the inimitable Baiṣṇab lyrics but the imitation often involves a peculiar lack of judgment which makes him reproduce the heresies rather than the virtues of earlier poets. It is not necessary to give too many

[1] 1813 according to *Kabiyālādiger Gīt*, p. 110.

quotations but the following selected extracts as well as that given on p. 330 would illustrate his merits and defects.[1]

গমন সময়েতে কেঁদে গেল মুরারি।
তাই ভাবি দিবা শর্ব্বরী॥
জনমেরো মত রাধারে কাঁদালে
বুঝি, ব্রজে আসিবেনা শ্রীহরি॥
হরি কি আসিবে ব্রজে আর মনে সন্দেহ করি।
যদি মধুপুরী হেসে যেতো হরি পুন আসিতো বংশিধারী॥
হায়, দুটি করে ধরি যখনো আমায় যাই যাই বঁধু কয়।
তখনো শ্যামেরো কমলবদনো, নয়নের জলে ভেসে যায়॥

Nitāi's *biraha* songs, again, which however are rather scantily handed down, are not altogether negligible, although they have none of the superior merit of Rām Basu's *biraha*. We select here two specimens.

প্রেয়সি তোমার প্রেমধার
আমি শুধিলে কি তাহা শুধিতে পারি।
তুমি যে ধনো খাতকে দিয়েছ করজো
পরিশোধে তাহা পরাণে মরি॥
মনো বাঁধা রেখে তোমারো স্থানে
লইলাম প্রেম করজো করি।
সে ধারো উদ্ধারো হইবে কেমনে
লাভে মূলে হল দ্বিগুণ ভারি॥[2]

পীরিতি নগরে বিষমো সখি মনো চোরেরো ভয়।
বসতি ইহাতে দায়॥
নয়নে নয়নে সন্ধানো মন অমনি হরিয়ে লয়॥[3]

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[1] *Sambād Prabhākar*, Agrahāyan, 1261, p. 10.

[2] *Ibid* p. 9. *Gupta-ratnoddhār*, p. 198-9 ; *Kabiyālādiger Gīt*, p. 122

[3] *Ibid* loc. cit ; *ibid*, p. 197 ; *ibid*, p. 121.

Latest born of this group but intimately connected with Haru Ṭhākur in poetical rivalry, in superior reputation and also in the singularly unsympathetic criticism which has been lavished from time to time upon him, is Rām Basu. He was considerably younger than Haru and Nitāi—almost by forty-eight and thirty-five years respectively—having been born about 1786 ; but he survived Nitāi by seven years and died only a year before Haru Ṭhākur. His full name was Rām-mohan Basu but he was widely and popularly known through the abbreviated form of his name, Rām Basu. His birth-place was Sālkiā on the right bank of the Hoogly and his father's name was Rām Lochan Basu. Like every village-boy he was at first educated at the village *pāṭhśālā* and then at the age of twelve he was sent to Calcutta to his uncle's (father's sister's husband) house at Jorasanko for further education. But like Haru Ṭhākur, Rām Basu showed even in his early years a marked tendency towards poetical composition which made his ambitious father sorry but which brought the young poet to the notice of the kabiwala Bhabānī Baṇik. Bhabānī's training and encouragement made Rām Basu realise very early the true bent of his genius. His father dying soon after this, Rām Basu had to give up his studies and became a clerk in some mercantile office. But his poetical aptitudes proving too strong, he ultimately took up the profession of a Kabiwala—a lucrative profession, however, in those days—as a regular means of livelihood. At first he continued to compose songs and sing for Bhabānī, later on for Nīlu Ṭhākur, Ṭhākur-dās Siṁha and others ; but in the end, a few years before his death, he formed a party of his own, at first amateur eventually professional.

Rām Basu. 1786-1828.

Of his character nothing definite is known but Rām Basu seems to have been one of those poets who have

relished this life heartily while heartily believing in another.

His temper and character at once religious and sensual.

He was not a man of ascetic or inelastic temper nor had he taken upon himself the mere materialism or the satiated attitude of latter-day poets; but he had enough simplicity and integrity of feeling which made him grateful for the joys of life but repentant when he had exceeded in enjoying them. Tradition speaks of his partiality for one Jajñeśvarī,[1] a songstress of Nīlu Ṭhākur's party, who was herself a gifted Kabiwala of some reputation in her time. But though he was himself not above reproach, he would still satirise with considerable frankness and sincerity the reckless young men of his time.[2] Indeed Rām Basu's poems express, in the most vivid and distinct manner, the alternate or rather varying moods of a man of soft sensibilities, religious as well as sensual.

Rām Basu's poems, which however have not come down in a more complete or more abundant form than Haru Ṭhākur's, divide themselves in three groups, *sakī-saṁbād*, *biraha* and *āgamanī*. In all these three departments of Kabi-poetry he is said to have excelled; but the poems which have survived in each department do not display an equal degree of merit. His songs on *sakhī-saṁbād*, although placed by popular opinion in the same rank with Haru Ṭhākur's exquisite things in the same line, are certainly much inferior not only to those of his rival Haru but also, it seems, to those of Nitāi Bairāgī. Although

Three groups of his poems.

[1] Of Jajñeśvarī, no details are known; one or two of her songs have survived which are noticeable. They will be found in *Baṅga Sāhitya Parichaya*, vol. ii; also in other anthologies.

[2] ঘরের ধন ফেলে প্রাণ পরের ধনকে আগুলে বেড়াও।
নাহি জান ঘর বাসা কি বসন্ত কি বরষা
সতীকে করে নিরাশা অসতীর আশা পুরাও।

there are some fine pieces which one should not capriciously ignore,[1] his songs on *sakhī-saṁbād* are marked by an artificiality of tone, by a considerable display of cheap ingenuity and sometimes by a vulgarity of tone and sentiment which very often mars his beautiful passages. We have quoted already one song of this type while illustrating the feebleness and inadequacy of Kabi-songs in reproducing the spirit and grace of earlier poetry. Rām Bāsu is often regarded as the greatest poet of this group: but he is at the same time the most unequal poet. Indeed the songs of Rām Basu, in spite of their charm and appeal, illustrate very aptly the utmost capacity as well as the utmost limitation of Kabi-poetry in all its aspects. The merits and defects of these songs are alike very great. As on the one hand, we have, in some of them, considerable simplicity of style, directness of expression, vigorous use of the vernacular idiom, tenderness and human interest, so on the other, we have the almost cloying display of verbal or alliterative dexterity, the conscious elaboration of trivial themes or trite sentiment, the comparatively uninspired use of ornaments and conceits—the bane of a long-standing literary tradition—and a false and affected taste for the jingle of weakly and inharmonious phrases. Coming, as it does, at the end of this flourishing period of Kabi-poetry, Rām Basu's song at once represents the maturity as well as the decline of that species.

General characteristics of his songs especially of his songs on *sakhī-saṁbād*.

Taking in the first instance, his songs on *sakhī-saṁbād* in which we find all these merits and defects amply set forth. We cannot but admit their inferiority in tone, sentiment and expression as seen in lines like the following.

[1] See for instance his song মান করে মান রাখতে পারিনে or বসন্তেরে সুধাও সখি etc.

কর্ত্তে রাধার মান রক্ষে উভয় পক্ষে যেন মান রয়।
করে এ পক্ষে পক্ষপাত যে পক্ষে যাক্ রাধানাথ
জানি প্রেমপক্ষে শ্যাম আমার বিপক্ষে নয়॥

is a good specimen of verbal dexterity but it lacks in poetic illumination. Then again note the racy, yet inferior note of the following :—

শ্রীরাধায় বনে পরিহরি কোথা হে হরি।
লুকালে কি প্রাণ হরি ও প্রাণহরি।
এনে বনে কুল হরি, কে জানে বধিবে হরি,
হরি ভয় কি মনে করি মরি বোলে হরি হরি॥

or take even the following artificial and hardly inspiring lines at one time highly extolled as one of the best pieces of Rām Basu.[1]

জলে কি জ্বলে কি দোলে দেখ গো সখি কি হেলে হিল্লোলেতে।
পারিনে স্থির নির্ণয় করিতে।
শ্যামলো কমলো ফুটেছে বুঝি নিস্মলো যমুনা জলেতে॥
নিতি নিতি লই এই যমুনার জল সখি
জল মধ্যে কি আজ একি দেখ দেখি॥
জলে কি এমনো দেখেছ কখনো বল দেখি ওগো ললিতে॥
সই দেখ দেখি শোভা কিসের আভা হেরি জলো মাঝেতে।
প্রস্ফুটিত তমালো বৃক্ষ যারো কালো ঐ ছায়া কি ইথে॥
আরো সখি কালা চাঁদ কি আছে।
গগন মণ্ডলে কি পাতালে রয়েছে॥
বল দেখি সখি কালাচাঁদ কি উদয় হয় দিবসেতে॥

In his *sakhī-sambād*, if Rām Basu is not fantastic to frigidity, he is often insipid to dullness. If he does not disgust, he too often tires. It is very seldom that Rām

[1] This song is generally given as Rām Basu's ; but see *Baiṅga Sāhitya Parichay*, vol. ii, p. 1152, where it is placed under Haru Ṭhākur's name.

Basu bursts forth into comparatively fine lines like the following :—

ওগো চিনেছি চিনেছি চরণ দেখে
ঐ বটে সেই কালিয়ে।
চরণে চাঁদ ছাঁদ আছে দীপ্ত হয়ে।
সে চরণ ভজে ব্রজেতে আমায়
ডাকে কলঙ্কিনী বোলিয়ে॥
ভুবনমোহন না দেখি এমন
ঐ বই।
রূপ কি অপরূপ রসকূপ
আমরি সই।
কুলে শীলে কালি দিয়েছি আমি
কাল রূপ নয়নে হেরিয়ে॥

The above remarks equally apply to his *biraha* songs. Listen to this fantastic and long-drawn-out complaint of a languishing maiden.

His songs on *biraha*.

এ বসন্তে সখি পঞ্চ আমার কাল হলো জগতে।
করে পঞ্চ দুখে দাহ পঞ্চভূত দেহ পঞ্চত্ব বুঝি পাই পঞ্চবাণেতে॥
পঞ্চ যাতনা প্রায় নিশি পঞ্চ প্রহরেতে।
যদি পঞ্চামৃত করি পান নাহি জুড়ায় প্রাণ হৃদয়ে বেঁধে পঞ্চবাণ।
দেখ পঞ্চানন তনু ভস্ম করেছিলেন যার
এখন সেই দহে দেহ পঞ্চশরেতে॥
পঞ্চাক্ষর মকরধ্বজ বিরহি রাজ্যে রাজন
সহ সহচর পঞ্চশর রিপু হলো ভ্রমর কোকিলাদি পঞ্চজন॥
রাজা পঞ্চশর অঙ্গে হানে পঞ্চশর
তাহে উনপঞ্চাশত মলয় মারুত সই
আবার ভানু দহে তনু পঞ্চযোগেতে॥

সই গ্রহ প্রকাশিলে পঞ্চম মঙ্গল ফুলঘ্রাণ যেন পঞ্চবাণ।
পঞ্চদশ দিনে হ্রাস বৃদ্ধি যার তার কিরণেও দহে প্রাণ॥
পঞ্চম দ্বিগুণ বদন যার রাক্ষসের যে প্রধান
তার চিতা সম জ্বলছে সখি পঞ্চম দুখেতে প্রাণ॥
যদি দ্বিপঞ্চ দিকেতে চাই পঞ্চরিপু পাই পঞ্চ সহকারী নাই।
কেবল পঞ্চম অসাধ্যে পঞ্চ রিপুর মধ্যে
আমি থাকি যেন সখি পঞ্চ তপেতে॥
সই পঞ্চপাণ্ডবেরা খাণ্ডবকানন জ্বালায়ে ছিল যেমন।
তেমনি এ দেহ জ্বালায় সখি বসন্তের চর পঞ্চজন॥
পঞ্চম দ্বিগুণ দ্বিগুণ করে করিতে চাহি ভক্ষণ।
তাহে প্রতিবাদী হয়গো আসি প্রতিবাসি পঞ্চজন॥
বলে পঞ্চ রিপু গিয়েছে প্রাণে সয়েছে এ পঞ্চ কদিন আছে
কিন্তু এ পঞ্চ যাতনা প্রাণে আর সহেনা
সই এবার পঞ্চ মিশায় বুঝি পঞ্চ ভাগেতে॥

It is impossible to mistake the significance of these lines and their tendency to artificiality. Super-subtleties of ingenuity are more and more preferred to genuine poetic imagination; and the true and spontaneous accents of poetry are lost.

Leaning towards rhetoric and artificiality.

Indeed this tendency towards an artificial rhetorical style, this weakness for frigid conceits and for studied effects are very marked throughout the songs of Rām Basu and debase not a little the true quality of his work. There is a good deal of genuine passion and emotion in his songs but the artificial expression so often given to them makes them lose their proper appeal. The tricks of the artist are more apparent than the passion of the poet. They administer an exciting pleasnre to the eye and the ear but they seldom touch or transport. The

biraha of Rām Basu is not the *biraha* of the Baiṣṇab poets with its exquisite passion and poignancy nor is it the *biraha* of modern poets with its delicacy and refinement. It is too much of a verbal contest, of a frivolous and audacious linguistic strife of the *pragalbhā* heroine. The power of sarcasm is undoubted but fierce banter, mawkish sentimentalism or piercing irony forms its essence; and there is too much of "bite," of *ah* and *alas* of ostentatious distress to be at all touching, as in the following[1] :—

যা হোক ভাল ভালবাসিলে।
খেয়ে আমার মাথা পরের কথায় পীরিৎ ভেঙ্গে পালালে॥
করে আমার উপর রাগ রাখলে যার সোহাগ
এখন তার আদরে তোমার আদর বাড়িল॥
তোমার পীরিতি কি রীতি হোল হে যেমন হংসী মুষিকেরি প্রায়।
হংসী প্রেমের দায় পাখা দিয়ে ঢাকে তায় সে পক্ষ কেটে পালায়॥...
তোমার অন্তরে নাই একটু টান্।
বল ভালবাসি সেটা কেবল দেঁতোর হাসি হাস প্রাণ॥

আমার যা হবার হলো প্রাণ ভাল দায়ে পড়েছে।
রাহুগ্রস্ত শশী যেমন তেমনি হয়েছে।
সন্ধিযোগে সে শশির স্থিতি দণ্ড নয়।
সন্ধ্যা হোলে তোমার প্রাণ নিত্য গ্রহণ হয়।
সারানিশি সর্ব্বগ্রাসী দিনে চাঁদ মুখ বাহিরয়॥

আজি বিরহবাসরে নাথেরে ভেবে অন্তরে শরশয্যায় করিয়া শয়ন।
সংগ্রামে পাণ্ডবের হাতে ভীষ্মদেবের দশা যেমন॥

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[1] All these specimens are taken from *Saṁbād Prabhākar*. Some of them are reproduced in *Saṅgīt-sār*, vol. ii.

আমার পতিরে বোলো দেশের ভূপতি বসন্ত।
যদি সে রৈল দেশান্তর, কে দিবে রাজার কর
হবে কি কোকিল-রবে প্রাণান্ত॥
সেত জানেনা ঋতু বসন্ত কেমন দুরন্ত।
অঙ্গে দে কর বলে দে কর।
বলি সর ওরে পঞ্চশর আমাদের ঘরেতে নাই ঘর॥
মদন যে করে করের তরে, এমন আর কে করে
ওরে সাধে কি কোরেছে শিব শাপান্ত॥
ভার্য্যে রেখে মদন রাজ্যে, সই, কান্ত গেল দেশান্তর
সজনি, দিবা রজনী বিরহে দহে কলেবর॥
আমার যেমন কপাল পোড়া
তেমনি সই হরকোপে ঐ অনঙ্গের সর্ব্বাঙ্গ পোড়া
মদন সেই পোড়ার ভয়েতে পুরুষকে ধরেনা সই
এসে কামিনীর কাছে হোলো কৃতান্ত॥

আমি সাধে কি বিষাদে রয়েছি।
কোরে না বুঝে লোভ শেষ পেয়ে ক্ষোভ
বলি কাকে চোখে দেখে ঠকেছি।
যেমন মৎস্যমাংসভোগী হয়েছিল জম্বুকী
তুই কি আমার ভাগ্যে এখন সেইটে ঘটালি।
তোরে ভালবেসেছিলাম বোলে কিরে প্রাণ আমার দুকূল মজালি॥

আমার প্রাণনাথের স্বভাব ভাল নয়, কুটিল হৃদয় যেন বিষধর।
নিজ রসাভাসে দংশে এসে যদি সই জ্বলে মর্ব্ব নিরন্তর॥

There is also sometimes a tendency to elaborate didactic or symbolical form of expression.[1]

[1] *Prītigīti*, pp. 74-75; *Saṅgīt-sār-saṅgraha*, vol. ii, p. 1010. This didactic tendency the Kabiwalas probably got from the writers of the devotional songs, who from Rāmprasād downwards often

প্রেম তরুতে সখি চারটি ফল ফলে।
শুন ফলের নাম সুখ সৌখ্য মোক্ষ কাম
সুজনের সু কলঙ্ক কঠিনের কপালে॥
গোড়া কেটে মরে কেউ আগায় জল ঢেলে,
চিনে মূল যে দিতে পারে জল
ঘটে তার ভাগ্যেতে প্রেমতরুর হাতে হাতে ফল॥
তরু মনের রাগে বুড়িয়ে যায়
বিচ্ছেদ ছাগে মুড়িয়ে খায়
দেখো দেখো যত্নে রেখো, ফলবে না মূল শুকালে॥
প্রেমবৃক্ষে দিয়ে আশানীর করতেছ সিঞ্চন
দেখ লো যেন হয় না শেষে বৃথা আকিঞ্চন।
বেড়া দাও সই প্রবৃত্তি কণ্টকে
প্রেমঅঙ্কুরে আঘাত করে এম্‌নি পোড়া লোকে।
যদি থাকে ফলের বাসনা বেশি জল দিয়ে জ্বালিও না
সময়ে একবিন্দু দিলে সুখসিন্ধু উথলে॥

It is not necessary to multiply quotations which have already become too lengthy but these aspects of Rām Basu's songs (in particular his *biraha* songs) have been so often ignored that critics have gone to the length of declaring that the songs in question, smart and ingenious though they are, are the most beautiful specimens of Kabi-song. Beautiful specimens Rām Basu's *biraha* songs are but they are such only when Rām Basu rises above these fatal faults and depends upon the strength of his natural

But his charm and poetic spirit.

indulged in this vein. Rām Basu very dexterously makes use of colloquial idiom, even of slang, but he sometimes carries the tendency to the extreme, *e.g.*, 'অস্থি ভাজা ভাজা হলো প্রেমের দায়'। 'পিরীতি গেছে পাপ গেছে। হয়ে পরের পদানত চক্ষের জলে নিত্য যেত, যা হক বেনে এত দিনে গায়ে বাতাস লেগেছে। সুখের চেয়ে স্বস্তি ভাল ঘাম দে জ্বর ছেড়েছে॥' 'আমি এক আঁচড়ে পেলাম প্রেমের পরিচয়' etc.

poetic genius. It is allowable and desirable to pick these ugly weeds out of the garden; but unfortunately these unwelcome growths too often choke and destroy the charm even of his beautiful pieces. It is very seldom that we find exquisite and spontaneous utterance in Rām Basu but when we find them there is nothing better in the whole range of Kabi-poetry. Songs such as the following

মনে রইল সই মনের বেদনা।
প্রবাসে যখন যায় গো সে তারে বলি বলি বলা হল না।
সরমে মরমের কথা কওয়া গেল না॥

or

যৌবন জনমের মত যায়
সেত আসা পথ নাহি চায়॥

or

দাঁড়াও দাঁড়াও দাঁড়াও প্রাণনাথ, বদন ঢেকে যেও না।
তোমায় ভালবাসি তাই চোখের দেখা দেখতে চাই
কিছু থাক থাক বলে ধরে রাখব না।

and many other fine things are often quoted and praised and they deserve quotation and all the praise that have been bestowed upon them. They are too well-known to require comment or quotation again here and they may be found in almost all selections of Bengali songs. But one or two of the less well-known may perhaps be welcome again.

তোমার প্রেম হতে, প্রাণ, বিচ্ছেদ আমায় ভালবেসেছে।
প্রেম হল আর ফুরালো, চখে দেখতে দেখতে গেল,
জন্মের মত বিচ্ছেদ আমার অন্তরে পশেছে
কলহ নির্ব্বাহ হয়ে সন্দেহ মিটেছে॥
তোমার প্রেমে সঁপে প্রাণ কেবল হল অপমান
সুখ হবে কি বল দেখি সাধতে গেল প্রাণ।

এ সব সুখের চেয়ে আমার স্বস্তি ভাল হে
সে সব সাধাসাধির দায়ে প্রাণ বেঁচেছে ॥
পরের ভালবাসা প্রেমের আশা সকলি আকাশ।
কোন সুখ দেখিনা শঠের প্রেমে দুঃখ বারমাস।
কেবল হাঁসায় আর কাঁদায় সদা প্রাণেতে জ্বালায়
আজ নে তোলে সিংহাসনে কাল পথেতে বসায়।
পথে কেঁদে কেঁদে বেড়াই হয়ে আপনার ধনে আপনি চোর
সে সব প্রবৃত্তি এখন নিবৃত্তি হয়েছে ॥

প্রাণ, তুমি আপনার নহ আমার হবে কি।
মনে মনে মনাগুণে আমি জল্‌ব বই আর বল্‌ব কি।
অনেক দিনের আলাপ বোলে আদরে ডাকি।
কেমন আছ তুমি, প্রাণ, শুনি শ্রবণে।
প্রাণ গেলে, প্রাণ, নিজ দুঃখ তোমায় বলিনে।
ফলহীন বৃক্ষের কাছে সাধ্‌লে কাঁদ্‌লে ফল্‌বে কি ॥

Rām Basu's *biraha* songs have been more than once criticised on the ground of its alleged immoral tendency. [1] There is no doubt, as we have pointed, too much of frivolity, grossness, vilification, audacity, smartness of repartee and pursuit of selfish pleasure in most of these songs and that there is an indecorous laxity of expression, an improper looseness of style which debases the quality of these songs; but the point is too often ignored that what is expressed in these songs is not the love of the analytic and self-questioning artist or the refined rapture of the idealist but the love of the natural man with all the force and crudity of its natural passion. Love in

The alleged immoral tendency of his songs

[1] Chandraśekhar Mukhopādhyāy, *Sāśvat-Kuñja* (essay on Rām Basu's *biraha*), also see Preface to *Rasabhāndār* by the same author.

this poetry does not die in dreams nor is it troubled with a deep philosophy or bored with its own ideality, soaring into vague passion or indefinite pantheism. It is strong, naturalistic and direct, if also a little boisterous, un-refined and even gross. It is surely too much to bring in moral considerations for judgment upon this honest cry of the erotic passion

but their expression of genuine human passion.

যৌবন জনমের মত যায়
সেত আশাপথ নাহি চায়।
কি দিয়ে গো প্রাণসখি রাখিব উহায়॥
জীবন যৌবন গেলে আর
ফিরে নাহি আসে পুনর্ব্বার
বাঁচিতো বসন্ত পাব কান্ত পাব পুনরায়॥

or of

একে আমার এ যৌবনকাল তাতে কাল বসন্ত এল।
এ সময় প্রাণনাথ প্রবাসে গেল।
যখন হাসি হাসি সে আসি বলে
সে হাসি দেখে ভাসি নয়নের জলে
তারে পারি কি ছেড়ে দিতে মন চায় ধরিতে
লজ্জা বলে ছি ছি ধরো না॥

nor is it possible to underrate the palpitating humanity of the following oft-quoted lines which may be quoted again

বালিকা ছিলাম ভালো ছিলাম
সই ছিল না সুখ অভিলাষ।
পতি চিনতাম না ও রস জানতেম না
হৃদপদ্ম ছিল অপ্রকাশ।
এখন সেই শতদল মুদিত কমল
কাল পেয়ে ফুটিল॥

or

এই খেদ তারে চখে দেখে মরতে পেলাম না।
আমায় চাক্ বা না চাক্ সদা সুখে থাক্
কেন দেখা দিয়ে একবার ফিরে গেল না।
জীবনো থাকিতে প্রাণ নাথ যদি নাহি এলো নিবাসে।
লুব্ধ আশা দিয়ে সে কেন রইল প্রবাসে॥

To condemn these expressions of the franker and simpler moods of the passion itself is unjust and canting prudery; and the whole controversy over the question of moral tendency would seem to one to be a signal instance of the wrong thing in the wrong place. It is more than useless or irrelevant either to read austere morals into these poets or damn them for their want of morals. To anyone who can appreciate the *bonhomie* of Kabi-poetry, the songs remain and remain yet unsurpassed, inspite of its very direct plain-speaking (or coarseness if you will) according to modern standards, as the most frank expression of physical affection, of the exceedingly human, honest and natural passion of the man for the woman. The amatory fashion of the world passeth but instead of undervaluing it or sneering at it when it is gone, let us appreciate the reality, force and naturalness of human passion wherever and in whatever shape it may be found.

His *āgamanī*

The *āgamanī* songs of Rām Basu, even more than his *biraha* songs, have all along enjoyed a reputation never yet surpassed; and this reputation they certainly deserve. The *sakhī-sambād* and *biraha* songs of other Kabiwalas may approach or challenge comparison with those of Rām Basu; but in *āgamanī* Rām Basu is undoubtedly

supreme.[1] The secret of his excellence in this respect lies in the fact that in most of these songs Rām Basu the poet and the man rises superior to Rām Basu the mere literary craftsman, and that sincerity, naturalness and simplicity constitute the essence of his charm. It is not the superhuman picture of ideal goodness but the simple picture of a Bengali mother and a daughter that we find in the Menakā and Umā of Rām Basu. We seem to hear the tender voice of our own mother, her anxious solicitude for her daughter, her weakness as well as strength of affection in lines like these.

Its sincerity, simplicity and human interest.

তারা-হারা হোয়ে নয়নের তারা হারা হোয়ে রই।
সদা কই উমা কই আমার প্রাণ উমা কৈ।
আমার সেই তারা-হারা ত্রিজগতের সারা বিধি এনে মিলালে।
উমা চন্দ্রবদনে ডাক্‌ছে মা মা মা বোলে।
উমা যত হেসে কয় ওতো হাসি নয়
যেন অভাগীর কপালে অনল জ্বলে॥

Menakā has repeatedly implored her husband to bring back her daughter whom she has not seen for over a year; but her husband being apparently apathetic, the neglected daughter has come of herself and the tender heart of the mother bursts forth in gentle reproach upon the ponderously indifferent father.

তবে নাকি উমার তত্ত্ব কোরে ছিলে।
গিরিরাজ ওহে শুন শুন তোমার মেয়ে কি বলে॥

[1] A short comparative account of the *āgamanī* of Rām Basu, Kamalākānta and Dāśarathi Rāy will be found in *Bhāratbarṣa*, Kārtik, 1325, p. 712. The earliest recorded Āgamanī song is that of Rām Prasād, and in this respect the Kabiwalas must have been considerably influenced by Rām Prasād, Kamalākānta and other writers of devotional songs.

নারী প্রবোধিয়ে যেতে হে কৈলাসে যাই বোলে।
এসে বল্‌তে মেনকা তোমার দুঃখের কথা
উমা সব শুনেছে।
তোমায় দেখতে পাষাণী আপনি ঈশানী আসতে চেয়েছে।
তুমি গিয়েছিলে কই উমা বলে এই হে
আমি আপনি এসেছি জননী বলে॥

And nothing can be more forcible than this simple yet touching reproof

ভাল হোক হোক্ ওহে গিরি।
যাই আমি নারী তাই ভুলি বচনে।
তোমারো কি মনে হোতো না হে সাধ
হেরিতে উমার চন্দ্রাননে॥

In most of the *āgamanī* songs of the Kabiwalas, the anxious mother dreams of her absent daughter. In Rām Basu the dreams are not bad or gloomy dreams but dreams of joyful anticipation or tender foreboding.

গত নিশিযোগে আমি দেখেছি হে সুস্বপন।
এলো সেই আমার তারাধন।
দাঁড়ায়ে দুয়ারে বলে মা কই মা কই মা কই আমার
দেখা দাও দুখিনীরে।
অমনি দুবাহু পশারি উমা কোলে করি
আনন্দেতে আমি আমি নয়॥

It is impossible to underrate the simplicity, tenderness and beauty of these lines. There is no touch of ornamental rhetoric, no artificiality, nor is there any refined rapture or philosophic depth in these lines. They embody the simple utterance of a simple heart. What is daily observed and what is natural supply the essential ingredient of these songs; and if the test of poetic power be its

capacity of making the common as though it were uncommon, then surely Rām Basu was a poet in the true sense of the term.

After enumerating these greater names, which citation however does not exhaust the poetical riches of this remarkable period, we come to the lesser poets who accompanied or came behind them. It is, however, not necessary for us to embark in detail upon the history of Kabi-poetry after this period; for after 1830, Kabi-poetry languished in the hands of the less inspired successors of Haru, Nitāi and Rām Basu. It continued even up to 1880[1] to be a very popular form of entertainment; but it rapidly declined, if not in quantity, at least in quality. Of this belated group, Nīlu and Rāmprasād Ṭhākur,[2] Anthony or Antonio the domiciled Portuguese songster,[3] Ṭhākurdās Siṁha,[4] Ṭhākurdās

Kabi-poetry after 1830.

[1] To what degraded state Kabi poetry had descended by that time may be realised by reading the vehemently denouncing article on Kabi-poetry which appeared in *Bāndhab*, Pous, 1282 (1875), p. 267.

[2] Nīlmaṇi and Rāmprasād Chakrabartī lived at Simla, Calcutta. Nīlu was the younger of the two brothers. Several songs sung in their party are given in *Prāchīn Kabisaṁgraha* at pp. 36, 43, 46, 72, 89 etc.

[3] Anthony or Anthony Firingi is said by Rājnārāyaṇ Basu in his *Ekāl O Sekāl* to be of French extraction. He lived at Gareti near Chandannagar and at one time his *Kabi dal* was very famous. He is said to have fallen in love with a Brāhmaṇ woman whom he married and through whom he was converted into Hinduism. See for details Dinesh Chandra Sen, *Baṅgabhāṣā O Sāhitya*, 3rd Ed., pp. 627-628, *Baṅga Sāhatya Parichay* (some of his songs quoted), p. 1576; *Nabyabhārat*, 1312, pp. 194-98; *Baṅger Kabitā*, pp. 318-22; *Baṅgabhāṣār Lekhak*, pp. 375-377.

[4] Not much is known about him but he was a contemporary and rival of Anthony. See *Nabyabhārat*, 1312, pp. 645-646. Ram Basu used to compose for his party; see *Prachīn Kabi Saṁgraha*, pp. 38, 40, 59, 68.

Chakravartī,[1] Thākurdās Dātta,[2] and later on Gadādhar Mukhopādhyāy[3] and even Īśvar Gupta[4] obtained considerable reputation as Kabiwalas or composers of kabi-songs but we also hear of a host of others—Nīlmani Pāṭaṇi,[5] Bholā Mayarā,[6] Chintā Mayarā, Jagannath Baṇik, Uddhaba dās, Lakṣmīkānta or Lakṣmīnārāyaṇ Jogī (Loke Jugī), Gorakṣa Nāth,[7] Guro Dumbo,[8] Bhīmdās Mālākar,

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[1] Born in 1209 B. S. (1802 A. D.) in the district of Nadīya. He never formed his own party but composed chiefly for Antony, Bholā, Balarām Baiṣṇab, Nīlmaṇi Paṭani and Rāmsundar Svarṇakār. For details see *Nabyabhārat* 1312, pp. 641-48. Some of his songs are given in *Prāchīn Kabisaṁgraha*, at pp. 23, 32, 37, 52, 73, 91 and in *Gupta-ratnoddhār*, pp. 261-261.

[2] Born in 1207 (1800 A. D.) at Byātrā, Howrah. See *Nabyabhārat*, pp. 643-44 ; *Baṅgabhāṣār Lekhak*, pp. 325-327.

[3] Composed for the party of Rāmlochan Basāk of Joransanko, who was the rival of Mohan Chānd Basu. Also composed for Bholā, Nīlu Ṭhākur and Nīlu Pāṭani. See his songs quoted in *Prāchīn Kabisaṁgraha* at pp. 21, 27, 36, 50, 64, 72, 89, 94, 115, 118, 121, 128, 130 etc. ; also in *Gupta-ratnoddhār*, pp. 213-247.

[4] His Kabi-songs are quoted in *Gupta-ratnoddhār*, pp. 247-261 ; also a few in *Prāchīn Kabisaṁgraha*.

[5] Rām Basu, Gadādhar Mukhopādhyāy and various other poets composed for him. See *Prāchīn Kabisaṁgraha*, pp. 27, 28, 64, etc. Some of his own songs are given in *Gupta-ratnoddhār*, pp. 208-9.

[6] Was a sweetmeat-vendor at Bagbazar. He was a disciple of Haru Ṭhākur's. See for details *Bhāratī*, 1304, pp. 59-66. *Nabyabhārat*, 1314, pp. 67-73. *Baṅger Kabitā*, *loc. cit.* Some of the songs sung in his party are given in *Prachīn Kabisaṁgraha* at pp. 21, 37, 50, 67 etc. Jagannāth Baṇik was his great rival.

[7] Gorakṣanāth was a "composer" of Antony's party but subsequently quarrelled with him and formed his own party (see *Nabyabhārat*, 1312, pp. 194-198 ; *ibid* 1313, pp. 577-78). Rāmānanda Nandī was one of his rivals. Gorakṣanāth's sons are given in *Gupta-ratnoddhār*, pp. 294-296 ; and in *Prāchīn Kabisaṁgaha*, pp. 48, 70, 110 etc.

[8] *Prāchīn Kabisaṁgraha*, p. 66.

Balarām Dās Kāpālī,[1] Rāmsundar Śvarṇakār,[2] Matī Pasārī, Hosain Khān,[3] Parāṇdās and Udaydās, Kāṇā Maheś,[4] Mohanchānd Basu,[5] Rāmānanda Nandī,[6] Kṛṣṇamohan Bhaṭṭāchārya,[7] Jaynārāyaṇ Bandyopādhyāy, Rājkiśor Bandyopādhyāy,[8] Sātu Rāy[9] and Man-mohan Basu.[10] It is not possible nor desirable to enumerate all the names ; but the extraordinary fertility and popularity of this poetry will be sufficiently indicated by the list of names already cited. It is, however, like the swarming of flies in the afternoon lethargy and fatigue of a glorious day. There is, no doubt, occasional sprinkling of good verses as well as a general diffusion of the poetic spirit thinned and diluted

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[1] Lived in Chandannagar. His daughter's son Kṛṣṇadās was a Kabiwala. *Prāchīn Kabisaṁgraha* gives some songs sung in his party but they are not of his own composition.

[2] Was a clerk in some office but subsequently became a Kabiwala. He lived at Hāḍkātā Gully, Calcutta. Several songs sung in his party will be found in *Prāchīn Kabisaṁgraha.*

[3] Was the founder of *Tarjā*. Moti Pasārī was his rival.

[4] His name was Maheś Chandra Ghoṣ, a Kāyastha. He was born blind ; hence the nickname. For details see *Nabyabhārat*, 1313, p. 203-207.

[5] Was the founder of Hapākhḍāi Kabi. His special creation was the মোহনসাহী সুর. See preface to *Manmohan Gītābalī* and Rāmnidhi Gupta's *Gītaratna*. He was a disciple of Nidhu Babu's who however was not a Kabiwala. Also see preface to *Prāchīn Kabisaṁgraha.*

[6] Was a disciple of Nitāi Bairāgī. For details see *Nabyabhārat*, 1313, pp. 575-579.

[7] His songs are given in *Prāchīn Kabisaṁgraha*, and in a collected form in *Guptaratnoddhār*, pp. 281-293.

[8] The songs of Jayanārāyaṇ and Rājkiśor are given in *Prāchīn Kabisaṁgraha* ; also in *Guptaratnoddhār* at pp. 264-269.

[9] For details about his life etc., see *Nabyabhārat*, 1314, pp. 65-67. *Baṅga Bhāṣār Lekhak*, pp. 379-80. His songs are given in *Guptaratnoddhār* at pp. 275-279.

[10] Was quite a "modern." Not a Kabiwala strictly speaking but composed for *Kabi, Hāp-akhḍāi* and *Pāñchāli*. See *Manmohan Gītābalī* for his songs.

it may be in course of time ; but taken as a whole the later poetry is merely imitative and reproductive of the earlier and does not reward patient and detailed study. Not much of it can bear very well the beauty-truth test implied in the famous line of Keats. Nor are there materials enough to trace their systematic history in this period. In tone and temper as well as in poetic expression it declined considerably ; and with the advent of *Hāp-ākhḍāi* first set in fashion by Mohanchānd Basu[1] and of *Tarjā* popularised by Hosain Khān, the form itself as well as its spirit went through striking changes. These songsters no doubt kept up and still keeps up the native trend in poetry but in themselves they never reach that high level of literary excellence which would make them worthy of the attention of posterity. It is therefore not necessary to drag these inferior poets and their poems from their deserved obscurity or devote tedious pages to their comparatively uninspiring annals.

Hāp-ākhḍāi and *Tarjā*.

[1] For a history of this see *Saṁbād Prabhākar*, Agrahāyaṇ 8, 1261, and preface to *Manmohan Gītābalī*.

CHAPTER XI

Love-lyrics and Devotional Songs

Leaving aside the new prose-writing, the period of Bengali Literature between 1760 and 1830 may be not unfitly described as a lyrical interval in which a multitude of productions, varied grave and gay ditties, *kabi*, *ṭappās*, *yātrā*, *pāñchāli*, *ḍhap*, *kīrtan*, *Ṭāul*, devotional songs and exquisite bits of love-lyrics were pouring upon the literary world a flood of delicious harmony. There is, no doubt, a sprinkling of narrative and descriptive verse of the more serious type, but barring this, every poet was a natural vocalist and never there was a time when little songs were more abundant. Although carelessly fashioned, these charming little things possess all the attributes of a succes-ful song and seem to be alive with the energy of music. Even the most insignificant person in this synod of latter-day poets has a constant tendency to break unawares into singing and catch the spirit of melody which seemed to be in the air. The spirit itself is not so common and the gift of song-making not so usual; let us therefore value them while they are here and give them their due homage.

A lyric interval between 1760-1830.

One specific and important phase of this song-literature is represented by *ṭappā*-writers who possess this vocal quality in no mean degree; but to many a modern reader the exact signification of the term *ṭappā* seems to have been lost. A *ṭappā* is generally taken to be a melodious trifle, a savoury little lyric of the erotic type in which

Ṭappā-writers.

Meaning of the word *ṭappā*.

eroticism connotes wanton or ribald sensuality. *Ṭappā*, however, is a technical term which denotes, like *dhrupad* and *kheyāl*, a specific mode or style of musical composition, lighter, briefer yet more variegated. Etymologically derived from a Hindi word which means 'tripping' or 'frisking about' with the light fantastic toe, a *ṭappā* means a little song of a light nature.[1] It is more condensed than *dhrupad* and *kheyāl*, having only *āsthāyi* and *antarā*, and certainly more lively. Being essentially a specific style of musical composition, songs of all sorts, erotic, devotional or otherwise, may be composed in this style; but it was suited by its very nature for lighter love-songs and in Bengali at least it had established itself peculiarly and principally for that purpose. As its name implies and its history shows, the *ṭappā* is not indigenous but it was imported from abroad. It deals with the "minor facts" of art unable by its form and nature to compass the "major": but it has a distinct value as an entirely novel mode of art and as a protest against the conventional literary tradition.

Its characteristic quality and importance.

When Nidhu began to sing—and Nidhu Bābu is the earliest important *ṭappā*-writer of whom we have any record—we have, on the one hand, the dictatorship of Bhārat Chandra and of Rām-prasād, on the other, the flourishing period of Kabi-poetry and other forms of

A new trend in song-literature.

[1] See Jogeś Chandra Rāy, *Bāṅgālā Śabda-kośa* under *ṭappā*. In *Saṅgīt tānsen* (1299 B. S., pp. 66-69) two styles of musical composition are mentioned—*Dhrupad* and *Raṅgīn gān*; under *dhrupad* there are 24 varieties while *Raṅgīn gān* is of 50 kinds. *Kheyāl* and *ṭappā* are said to be varieties of the latter class. In *Sangīt-rāg-kalpadrum* by Kṛṣṇānanda Byās (Sāhitya Pariṣat ed. 1916, vol. III, p. 294), Nidhu Bābu's *ṭappās* are comprised under *Bāṅgālā Raṅgīn Gān*. *Ṭappā*, unlike *Kabi*, *Pañchāli* or *Yātrā*, was essentially *Baiṭhakī gān* (or songs for the drawing room) which was appreciated chiefly, if not wholly, by the upper classes.

popular literature. If the date of Bhārat Chandra's death be 1760 and that of Rām-prasād a few years later, Rāmnidhi Gupta must have been at that time a young man of nineteen or twenty: and the influence of Bhāra-Chandra and Rām-prasād existed widely throughout this period even down to the middle of the 19th century. On the other hand, all the earliest Kabiwalas and Pāñchālikārs were Nidhu Bābu's contemporaries, for the latter lived up to 1838. Nidhu Bābu therefore and most of the *ṭappā*-writers who followed him were born and bred up in the midst of the conventional literary tradition which these two characteristic phases of contemporary literature represented. But Nidhu Bābu followed neither of these beaten paths; he struck out into an entirely novel and original line. With the examples of Bhārat Chandra's *Bidyāsundar* and of Rām-prasād's devotional songs on the one hand, not to speak of the isolated imitations of still earlier styles, and with Kabi-gān and other forms of popular literature, on the other, Rāmnidhi chose to inaugurate a new type of love-poetry in Bengali, in imitation of Hindi *ṭappā* and *kheyāl*, no doubt, but with a considerable indication of an original vein. Considering the unquestioned dominance of the current schools and traditions, it is no little or mean indication of courage, originality and genius to establish a new mode of art; and in this respect the importance and originality of Nidhu and the *ṭappā*-writers can never be exaggerated.

Its freedom and spontaneity.

The characteristic charm and value of these *ṭappās*, therefore, lies in the fact that they are spontaneous and free. They are not hampered by time-honoured conventions nor do they pay any homage to established schools and forms of art. They speak of love, no doubt, an eternally engaging theme with poets of all times, but they do

not speak of Bidyā and Sundar or of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. The poet looks into his own heart and writes; he sings of his own feelings, his own joys and sorrows, his own triumph and defeat; he does not seek the conventional epic or narrative framework for the expression of what he thinks and feels nor does he take refuge under the cloak of *parakīya bhāb* which earlier poets thought essential. The exquisite lyric cry becomes rampant and universal. Ancient literature is mostly objective, if not always narrative and epic; the inward feeling seldom or never out-tops the outward vision; and whatever the poet speaks of himself he expresses through his suitable mouthpieces. With the *ṭappā*-writers came an outburst of the personal element, an overflow of sensibility, an enfranchisement of the passion and the imagination: for the universal heart of man must be touched through what is most personal and intimate. The sense of the difficulty and complexity of modern problems is, no doubt, absent in them nor do they possess the finish and refinement of modern lyrics, yet the *ṭappā*-writers foreshadow in their own way that introspective element which has since developed itself in such great measure—some think out of all measure—in modern poetry.

and assertion of the personal element.

The *ṭappā*-writers, therefore, possess originality at an epoch in which nothing of great value was being produced in poetry; they attempt at simple and natural, though not colloquial, diction and write with an easy and careless vigour; they are truthful to nature and avoid frigid conventionality and classicality. But they had as much of the new spirit as their readers were then fit for; and though their work contained the seeds of the impending change of taste, it is an

Novel and original but not entirely modern.

absurdity to represent them as thoroughly revolutionary or entirely "modern." Regarded from the standpoint of form, their songs incline more to the old than to the new. They write with ease and naturalness, no doubt, but the varying measures and melodies of the coming age were not for them. In ideas and general tone also they did not venture to go beyond certain limits. They preserve in a degree the old posture and the old manner. But in spirit and temper, if not in anything else, they herald the new age. The contrast between them and writers like Jaynārāyaṇ Ghoṣāl, who was almost contemporaneous, will exhibit the whole difference between the old and the new poetical instincts. They were, therefore, like intermediaries between the old and the new poets and, although casting a lingering look behind, they stand at the threshold of the new age of poetry.

Intermediate place between the old and the new spirit.

Rāmnidhi Gupta (or simply and endearingly Nidhu Bābu) was the earliest and by far the most important writer of this group. There was a time when people went into ecstasies over Nidhu Bābu's songs and singing. It is not clear whether Nidhu Bābu was the first dealer in this new species or whether it was he who introduced it into Bengali; but the extraordinary power which he displayed and the enormous popularity he enjoyed justify the high eulogy bestowed upon him by his glorious nickname "the Śori Miñā of Bengal." As a result of the capricious instability of changing taste, Nidhu Bābu's songs are sometimes severely deprecated to-day and seldom read; yet from the artistic as well as historical standpoint, these neglected songs, it must be admitted, possess considerable value and importance.

Rāmnidhi Gupta or Nidhu Babu, the earliest and most important *kaṗṗi*-writer.

Rāmnidhi Gupta was born in 1741 A. D. (1148 B. S.) in the house of his maternal uncle at the village of Chāṅptā near Tribeṇī.[1] His father lived at Kumārtulī in Calcutta where Nidhu's descendants still reside. Nidhu came with his father to Calcutta in 1747 where he learnt Sanscrit and Persian and also a bit of English from a missionary.[2] Through the efforts of his co-villager Rāmtanu Pālit, dewān of Chhāprā Collectorate, he obtained [3] in 1776 the situation of a clerk in the same office where he continued for 18 years. He gave up the post through a difference of opinion with his official superior Jaganmohan Mukhopādhyāy who had succeeded Rāmtanu in the office of the dewān, and returned to Calcutta. While residing in Chhāprā, Nidhu used to learn the theory and practice of music from an expert Mohammedan musician but on finding after some time that the master was unwilling to impart his knowledge to such a quick-witted disciple he gave up Mohammedan music and himself began to compose Bengali songs on the pattern of Hindi *ṭappās*. He married thrice in 1761, in 1791, and in 1794 or 1795. By his first wife he had a son who died early; but by his third wife he had four sons and two daughters, of whom the eldest son and daughter and the youngest died in his life time. He lived almost for a century and died at the very advanced age of 97 in 1839.[4]

His life.

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[1] These biographical details are gathered from various sources but chiefly from the account written by Īśvar Gupta in his *Saṁbād Prabhākar* (Śrābaṇ 1261 B. S.) from which is compiled also the life prefixed to the 3rd edition of Nidhu Babus *Gītaratna*, published in 1257 B. S.

[2] *Nārāyaṇ*, Jaiṣṭha, 1323, p. 739.

[3] *Journal of the Bengal Academy of Literature*, vol. i, no. 6, p. 4.

[4] For more details, see my article in *Sāhitya Pariṣat Patrikā*, 1324, pp. 108-110.

During the time he lived in Calcutta he obtained considerable popularity by his music and his song.[1] A big shed was erected at Baṭtalā Shobhabazar when Nidhu used to sing every night before an appreciative assembly of the rich and the elite of Calcutta; subsequently the sitting was shifted to the house of Rasikchānd Gosvāmī of Bagbazar. Nidhu Bābu was never a professional singer; but he was eagerly sought for and respected by the higher social circles of the then Calcutta. Though himself only an amateur and not a Kabiwala, it was chiefly through his efforts that in 1212-13 B. S. a "reformed" *ākhḍāi* party was established in Calcutta. Mohan Chānd Basu of Bagbazar, who first introduced *hāp-ākhḍāi* and set the tide against the fashion of *kabi* and *ākhḍāi*, first learnt the new style from Nidhu Bābu whom he always respected as his master.[2] We also learn that Nidhu was a man of grave and sedate character but of contented and cheerful disposition. There are rumours about his partiality for one Śrīmatī, a mistress of Mahārājā Mahānanda of Murshidābād; but his biographers [3] take pains to show that this was nothing more than the intimate feeling of cordial friendship.[4] Nevertheless many of his love songs were inspired by her and composed in her honour[5].

His popularity and character.

[1] That Nidhu Bābu was an expert musician and that the musical quality of his songs was of a very high order is indicated by the fact that Kṛṣṇānanda included nearly 150 songs of Nidhu Bābu in his great cyclopædia of Indian songs. In any estimate of Nidhu Bābu's *ṭappās*, this feature can never be ignored.

[2] Prefatory life in *Gītaratna*: also *Saṁbad Prabhākar*, *loc. cit.* But see preface to *Manmohan Gītābalī*.

[3] Prefatory life in *Gītaratna*; *Saṁbād Prabhākar*, Śraban 1, 1261.

[4] The stories relating to Śrīmatī and Nidhu Bābu given in *Nārāyaṇ*, *loc. cit.* are mere gossipy fables taken from a cheap ill-authenticated Baṭtalā publication, which was first brought to my notice by Babu Basantarañjan Rāy of Sāhitya Pariṣat.

An accurate and exhaustive collection of Nidhu Bābu's *ṭappās* has not yet been published. A year before his death was published his *Gītaratna Grantha*,[1] which purported to be a complete collection of his songs. It contains a preface in which the author states his intention of publishing a correct edition of his songs which had circulated in various forms. A revised edition of this work with a short sketch of Nidhu Bābu's life (compiled chiefly from *Saṁbād Prabhākar*) was published in 1868 by his son Jaygopāl Gupta. This edition does not differ materially from the first; the only additions take the form of 7 *ākhḍāi* songs, one *brahma-saṅgīt*, one *śyāmābiṣayak gīt* and one *bānībaṇḍanā*. There are numerous inferior editions [2]

His *Gītaratna Grantha* how far authentic and reliable.

[1] It contains 141 pages, of which pp. 1-8, in the copy possessed by the Sāhitya Pariṣat Library, are wanting. The title-page says: শ্রীশ্রীরামঃ। শরণং। গীতরত্ন গ্রন্থ শ্রীরামনিধি গুপ্ত রচিত গৌড়িয় সাধুভাষায় নানা প্রকার ছন্দে রাগরাগিনী সহিত শঙ্কোলিত হইয়া সন ১২৪৪ শালে কলিকাতা বিদ্বন্মোদ প্রেষে মুদ্রিত হইল॥ এই পুস্তক শোভাবাজার ৺নন্দরাম সেনের ইষ্ট্রিটে নং ২০ বাটিতে অন্বেষণ করিলে পাইবেন।

[2] In 1252 B.S. (1845) Kṛṣṇānanda Byās Rāgasāgar in his encyclopædic anthology, *Saṅgīt-rāga-kalpadrum* gives a collection of Bengali songs in which he includes more than 150 *ṭappās* of Nidhu Bābu mostly taken from *Gītaratna* (31 Ed.) and arranged almost in the same order. In 1257 B.S. (1850) an edition (marked as 3rd edition) of *Gītaratna* was published from Baṭtalā but it contains numerous doubtful songs taken from other sources, the genuineness of which however is extremely questionable. In 1293 (1886) was published *Baṅgīya Saṅgīt-ratnamālā* or *Kabibar Nidhu Bābur Gītābalī* a very uncritical collection compiled by Aśutoṣ Ghoṣāl (from 55 College Street, Hindu Library, Calcutta). It contains about 160 songs; but in order to make the collection attractive, songs from different sources are passed off as Nidhu Bābu's. The same remarks apply also to the more recent edition (2nd Ed. 1303) of Nidhu Bābu's songs published by Baiṣṇab Charaṇ Basāk from Baṭtalā entitled *Gītābalī or Nidhu Bābur* (*Rāmnidhi Gupter*) *Yābatīya Gītasaṁgraha*. Besides these, selections

and various anthologies were published in later times but the two editions mentioned are the most authentic sources of Nidhu Bābu's songs. But even in *Gītaratna*, songs are given of which the authorship is uncertain; and it cannot be, at least, in any way taken as a complete and exhaustive collection of the songs of Nidhu Bābu.[1] Some songs, for instance, which are given here are also to be found in Tārācharaṇ Dās's *Manmatha Kābya* (1247 B.S.) Banwārī Lāl's *Vojana-gandhā* or munsi Erādot's *Kuraṅgabhānu* (1252 B.S.), although it cannot be definitely determined whether it is a case of unacknowledged appropriation by subsequent authors. On the other hand, the famous song ভালবাসিবে বলে ভালবাসিলে। আমার স্বভাব এই তোমা বই আর জানিনে[2] is attributed successively to Śrīdhar Kathak, Rām Basu and Nidhu Bābu and is not included in *Gītaratna*. Such celebrated songs as the following নয়নেরে দোষ কেন। আঁখি কি মজাতে পারে না হলে মন-মিলন ॥[3] or তোমারি তুলনা তুমি প্রাণ এ মহীমণ্ডলে। or তবে প্রেমে কি সুখ হত। আমি যারে ভালবাসি সে যদি ভালবাসিত ॥[4] always attributed by tradition and by different editors to Nidhu Bābu are omitted in *Gītaratna*.[5]

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from Nidhu Bābu's songs are given in the numerous anthologies of Bengali songs and poems such as *Saṅgīt-sār-saṅgraha* (Baṅgabāsī edition 1306) vol. ii; *Rasabhāndar* edited by Chandra Śekhar Mukhopādhyāy (Basumatī office, 1306); *Bāṅgālīr Gān* (Baṅgabāsī); *Prītigīti*, edited by Abināś Chandra Ghoṣ; *Baṅga Sāhitya Parichay*, edited by Dinesh Chandra Sen, etc. But the songs in these anthologies are often indiscriminately selected from various sources (besides *Gītaratna*) and are very unreliable from the standpoint of critical scholarship.

[1] This question has been discussed in some detail in my paper in *Sāhitya Pariṣat Patrikā* (1324, pp. 103-107).

[2] *Saṅgīt-sār Saṅgraha*, p. 875; *Prītigīti*, pp. 153-154.

[3] *Ibid*, p. 851, *ibid*, p. 127; *Rasabhāndār*, p. 107.

[4] *Prītigīti*, p. 376; *Nidhu Bābur Gītābalī*, p. 172. According to others, it was composed by Śrīdhar Kathak.

[5] In *Saṅgīt-rāg-kalpadrūm* and among the additional songs in the third edition of *Gītaratna* (p. 148), the curious song beginning

This will indicate not only the uncertainty of authorship which bears upon many of these songs but also it will probably demonstrate that the *Gītaratna* does not exhaust all the songs of this prolific song-writer. Nevertheless, published during his life time and directly under his authority and supervision, the *Gītaratna* must be taken as the original and the most authentic and reliable collection of Nidhu Bābu's songs.

To many a modern reader Nidhu Bābu is known only his name and reputation ; his *tappās* are very seldom read or sung and are often condemned without being read or sung. Writing only sixteen years after Nidhu Bābu's death, Īśvar Gupta says: অনেকেই 'নিধু' 'নিধু' কহেন, কিন্তু নিধু শব্দটি কি, অর্থাৎ এই নিধু কি গীতের নাম, কি সুরের নাম, কি রাগের নাম, কি মানুষের নাম, কি কি? তাহা জ্ঞাত নহেন। The established reputation of many a bygone songster has, no doubt, been swept away by capricious change of taste from their venerable basements ; but the chief ground for assigning Nidhu Bābu's works to obscurity and oblivion is said by unjust and ignorant criticism to be its alleged immoral tendency. Kailāś Chandra Ghoṣ in his pamphlet on *Bengali Literature* (1885) mechanically echoed this opinion when he wrote 'ইহার অধিকাংশ গীতই অশ্লীলতা দুষ্ট' and Chandraśekhar Mukhopādhyāy is not less severe or

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with ককারে আকার ঽর ছাড়ি লয়ে বল দীর্ঘ ঈকার is given as Nidhu Bābu's; but it was composed by Ānanda Nārāyaṇ Ghoṣ, author of *Gītābalī*, as the *bhaṇitā* আনন্দের নিবেদন মন দিয়া শুন মন would clearly indicate and similarly in *Bāṅgīya saṅgīt ratnamālā*, the song headed পিরীতি পরম রতন and attributed to Nidhu Bābu is to be found in Michael Madhusūdan's *Padmābatī*. In the Baṭṭalā edition *Nidhu Babur Gītābalī* as well as in Anāth Kṛṣṇa Deb's *Baiṅger Kalpā* the song তোমার বিরহ সয়ে বাঁচি যদি দেখা হবে is assigned to Nidhu Babu but its author is Jagannāth Prasād Basu Mallik and it is omitted in *Gītaratna* (See *Prītigīti*, p. 461).

unjust when he rejected these songs as vulgar expression of sensual passion which is, to quote his words, 'আদিরসঘটিত পদাদ্যুথ, আহ্বানার্থে কুৎসিত, কোপপ্রকাশে কদর্য্যিত, আত্মপ্রাধান্যে অপবিত্র'[1] It cannot be denied indeed that there is a tendency, in these old-time songsters, of seasoning their songs with indelicacies and audacities of expression which were sometimes very enjoyable in their audience; but what we have already said on the moral tendency of the Kabiwalas in general and of Rām Basu's *kavita* in particular applies to a certain extent to the present question. Without entering into the problem of art for art's sake or art for the sake of morality, the whole controversy over the alleged morality or immorality of these songs is somewhat irrelevant or futile. We must take them for what they are worth and guard at once against reading rigid morals into them or condemning them for want of morals. In the first place, we need recall what Bankim Chandra said with regard to similar allegation on Īśvar Gupta's poetry ('তখন লোকে কিছু মোটা কাজ ভালবাসিত; এখন সরুর উপর লোকের অনুরাগ') and this distinction between gross and fine workmanship is essential and lies at the very root of certain definite aspects of ancient and modern Bengali literature. Inspite of all its faults this gross workmanship has one great advantage, viz., that if it is savage, uncouth and grotesque it is at the same time trenchant, vivid, and full of nervous and muscular energy. Polished or refined embroidery has its charm, no doubt, but it is also factitious and artificial. It lacks the tone of easy, genuine and natural passion; it is something

Crude workmanship but naturalness and sincerity

[1] In the same strain M. M. Haraprasād Śāstri speaks of Nidhu Bābu's *tappās* as নীচকবির কদাচার and even a critic like Bankim Chandra could not resist the temptation of having a fling at them in his *Bangadarśan*.

soi-disant, insipid and incomplete. The distinction drawn by modern critics between ornate and grotesque manner, between gothic and classic art, though overworked and often misunderstood, is one of the fundamental distinctions applicable to a certain extent to this case also. It may be a matter of taste whether a man prefers jagged angularity to harmonious roundness; but what is angular, what is gross, what is grotesque is nearer life in its primal sensations and in its terrible sincerity. It is like the ore fresh from the mines with all its dust and dross yet pure and unalloyed. In the songs of the Kabiwalas and in the *ṭappās* of Nidhu Bābu, we enjoy these rugged sensations of the natural man, if you will, who regards his passions as their own excuse for being, who does not pretend to domesticate them or present them under an ideal glamour. Their outward ruggedness is a mark of inward clarity. It is partly for this reason that these gross and chaotic songs possess so much appeal for the robust and keen perceptions of the masses but are entirely inaccessible to the decent, comfortable and self-righteous attitude of the bourgeoisie or the refined gentlemanliness of the aristocrat.

These poets were, therefore, in a sense realists or interpreters of real and natural emotions; and their songs are in the legitimate tradition of nature, although not always acceptable to the refined palate of the literary taster. It would, however, be absurd at the same time to suppose that these songs do not possess any touch of that idealism without which no poetry is poetry; they have enough of idealism but they do not deal with abstractions or live upon the air. Take for instance the intense realism of their idea of love. With them, Love is not a cold white ideal rising moon-like over the rapt

Intense realism of passion.

vision of the love-sick shepherd-prince. It is not extra-mundane, volatile and vague, losing itself in the worship of a phantom-woman or rising into mystic spirituality and indefinite pantheism; nor is it sicklied over with the subtleties of decadent psychologists or with the subjective malady of modern love-poets. It is exasperatingly impressionist and admirably plain-speaking. It does not talk about raptures and ideals and gates of heaven but walks on the earth and speaks of the insatiable hunger of the body and the exquisite intoxication of the senses as well. For these poets realised, as every true passionate poet has realised, that passion in its essence is not idealism which looks beyond the real but idolatry which finds the ideal in the real; for passion is primarily and essentially realistic. It cannot live upon abstractions and generalisations; it must have actualities to feed upon. It is not our purpose to consider here whether this idolatrous intoxication of passion is good or bad; but it cannot be denied that it bore ample fruit in the astonishing realism of their love-songs and brought their poetry nearer to world and life and to the actual and abiding spirit of love.

Love is conceived, therefore, in its concrete richness and variety, and not merely under its broad and ideal aspects. This essential realism of passion leads the poet to take body and soul together and not accept the one for the other. He is therefore always strong, vivid and honest, very seldom dreamy, ethereal or mystic. A sort of traditionary ill-repute, however, has very unduly got itself associated with the *tappās*, especially with the exquisite bits of Nidhu Bābu's songs. There is a good deal of frankness and a passionate sense of the good things of earth, it is true; but even judged by very

Nidhu Bābu's *tappās* not offensive or immoral.

strict standard, his songs are neither indecent nor offensive nor immoral.[1] The tone is always proper and although there is the unmistakable directness of passion and the plain humanity of their *motifs*, there is absolutely nothing which should drive critics into such strong opinions of condemnation. Even during his life-time and ever since his death, Nidhu's *ṭappās* obtained such extraordinary popularity and currency that even low and vulgar doggerels have passed off as his own. His *Gītaratna* has never since been reprinted and his *ṭappās* to-day are seldom favoured; the modern reader, therefore, understands by Nidhu's *ṭappās* the cheap vile and worthless street-songs which are sold in the name of Nidhu. It is no wonder, therefore, that his songs are taken as synonymous with *kheuḍ* and bad taste. In reality, however, no *ṭappā* is more tender and exquisite than the *ṭappā* of Nidhu.

His artistic merit and imperfections.

There is not much of artistic workmanship in Nidhu Bābu's songs; but there is lucidity as well as flavour in his poetical style, and tenderness and emotional force in his expression. There is no elaboration or fineness, no verbal dexterity, no prosodic variety or profusion of conceits and ornaments. The poet is absolutely indifferent with regard to his rhymes which are often faulty nor is he studiously fastidious with regard to word-selection which is not often impeccable. There are very few songs which taken as a whole are invulnerable in form or artistic requirements; and like most of the Kabiwalas he is singularly unequal, often great in single lines, in couplets, in 'patches,' but devoid of the gift of sustained utterance. Lines or verses like these taken at random

[1] An attempt has been made to analyse Nidhu Bābu's love-songs and show that they are not sensual and vulgar in my article in the *Sāhitya Pariṣat Patrikā*, 1324-121.

উদয় সুখতারা আমার নয়নতারা তার পথ নিরখিয়ে
কারণ না জানি আমি আছি কি রসে ভুলিয়ে।
নিশি হয় অবসান যেরূপ করিছে প্রাণ
কাহারে কহিব বল তাহারে কে কবে গিয়ে ॥[1]

হরিষ বিষাদ দুই বিচ্ছেদ মিলন
দুয়ের বাহিরে রাখে সেজন এমন ॥[2]

নয়নে নয়নে রাখি অনিমিখ হয় আঁখি
পলক পড়িলে আমি হই অতি দুখী
কি জানি অন্তর হও অই ভয় দেখি ॥[3]

সাধিলে করিব মান কত মনে করি
দেখিলে তাহার মুখ তখনি পাসরি ॥[4]

থাকিতে বাসনা যার চন্দন বনে
ভুজঙ্গেরে ভয় সেহ করে কি কখনে ॥[5]

মিলন কি সুখময় হৃদয়ে উদয় হল
ধরিয়া দুঃখের হাত বিচ্ছেদ চলিল ॥[6]

সে আদর আদর যে আদর
অধর কম্পে কহিতে।
দরশনে পরশনে অমিয় বচনে
পরাণ শ্রবণ সুখী আঁখির সহিতে ॥[7]

আর কি দিব তোমারে সঁপিয়াছি মন
মনের অধিক আর আছে কি রতন ॥[8]

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[1] *Gītaratna*, 3rd ed., p. 130.
[2] *Ibid*, p. 119.
[3] *Ibid*, p. 79.
[4] *Ibid*, p. 100.
[5] *Ibid*, p. 132.
[6] *Ibid*, p. 20.
[7] *Ibid*, p. 137.
[8] *Ibid*, p. 44.

হেরিলে হরিষচিত না হেরিলে মরি
কেমনে এমন জনে রহিব পাসরি ॥ [1]

বিচ্ছেদে যে ক্ষতি তাহা অধিক মিলনে
আঁখির কি আশা পুরে ক্ষণ দরশনে ॥ [2]

কিবা দিবা বিভাবরী পাসরিতে নাহি পারি
আঁখি অনিমিখ পথ হেরিতে হেরিতে ॥ [3]

are examples of undoubtedly fine but spasmodic bursts of the miraculous gift ; but, excepting a few poems which are flawless gems in form and substance, his verse often stumbles and halts where there is need for a brisk and sustained pace.

But he was undoubtedly a poet of high natural endowments, and the untutored feelings and passions of his heart he could express with unparalleled terseness and precision of touch. The rarest poetic feeling is oftener found in simpler verse than in an elaborate and studied masterpiece. The best and most characteristic of Nidhu Bābu's songs are love-songs ; but the limited subject of his verse never matters much, for in them he sometimes reaches a variety and a simple yet magnificent quality which is beyond the accurate black-and-white artist. His oft-quoted songs—

But true poetic quality.

নয়নেরে দোষ কেন।
মনেরে বুঝায়ে বল নয়নেরে দোষ কেন।
আঁখি কি মজাতে পারে না হলে মনমিলন ॥

[1] *Ibid*, p. 41. [2] *Ibid*, p. 12. [3] *Ibid*, p. 9.

আঁখিতে যে যত হেরে সকলি কি মনে ধরে
যেই যাকে মনে করে সেই তার মনোরঞ্জন ॥ [1]

তারে ভুলিব কেমনে।
প্রাণ সঁপিয়াছি যারে আপন জেনে ॥
আর কি সে রূপ ভুলি প্রেম তুলি করে তুলি
হৃদয়ে রেখেছি লিখে অতি যতনে।
সবাই বলে আমারে সে ভুলেছে ভুল তারে
সে দিন ভুলিব তারে যে দিন লবে শমনে ॥ [2]

or even some of his less known pieces—

কে ও যায় চাহিতে চাহিতে
ধীর গমন অতি হাসিতে হাসিতে।
যতক্ষণ যায় দেখা না পারি সরিতে
আঁখি মোর অনিমিক হেরিতে হেরিতে ॥ [3]

আনন্দ ভর করি দাড়াইয়ে সুন্দরী হেরিতে মনোরঞ্জনে।
নয়নে মনসংযোগ নাহিক ভয় গঞ্জনে ॥
প্রতি অঙ্গ পুলকিত মুখপদ্ম প্রফুল্লিত
স্থির করি আছে দেখ দুই নয়নখঞ্জনে ॥ [4]

না হতে পতন তরু দহন হইল আগে
আমার এ অনুতাপ তারে যেন নাহি লাগে ॥
চিতে চিতা সাজাইয়ে তাহে দুখতৃণ দিয়ে
আপনি হইব দগ্ধ আপনারি অনুরাগে ॥ [5]

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[1] Omitted in *Gītaratna*, but given as Nidhu Bābu's in *Prītigīti*, p. 154; *Sangīt-sar-sangraha*, vol. II, p. 875; *Rasikbandar*, p. 107.

[2] Omitted in *Gītaratna* but given in *Gītāvalī* or *Nidhu Bābur Gītasangraha*, p. 131; *Rasikbandar*, p. 106. In *Prītigīti* the song is attributed to Harimohan Rāy

[3] *Gītaratna*, p. 87.

[4] *Ibid*, p. 87.

[5] *Sangīt-sar-sangraha*, vol. II, p. 850; omitted in *Gītaratna*.

বিচ্ছেদেতে যায় প্রাণ না পারি রাখিতে
কাতর নয়ন মনে লাগিল কহিতে।
শুনি মন করে ধ্যান প্রাণেরে বাচাতে
চাক্ষুষ বিহীনে নাহি উপায় ইহাতে ॥ [1]

are fine instances of what he was capable of achieving at his best ; and his best is not something to be lightly spoken of.

Rādhā Mohan Sen and his *Saṅgīt taraṅga*.

Nidhu Bābu in the preface to his *Gītaratna* states that his book is not the first of its kind in Bengali ; to what other works of the same nature he refers cannot be determined but we know for certain the existence of a collection of songs by Rādhāmohan Sen, a Kāyastha musician who lived at Kānsāripāḍā, Calcutta, and who published his *Saṅgīt taraṅga*[2] in 1818 (1275 B. S.) This work, however, is an elaborate treatise on music with the description of various *Rāgas* and *Rāgiṇīs* and is in no way directly concerned with our enquiry. It however contains about 123 songs subsequently collected together and published with some additional pieces in the author's later work *Rasa-sāra-saṅgīt* (1839). These songs, though very popular at one time, are not all *ṭappās* nor do they

[1] *Gītaratna*, p. 21.

[2] There is a copy of the first edition in the Sāhitya Pariṣat Library bearing this title-page সঙ্গীত তরঙ্গ। ভাষাগ্রন্থ। শ্রীরাধামোহন সেন দাস। কৃত। কলিকাতায় বাঙ্গালি। প্রেসে। বাঙ্গালা বহ্বর্যন্ত্রে। ছাপা হইল সন ১২২৫। ১৭৪০ শক। pp. contents and 1-267. Another edition in 1256 B.S. by his grandson Ādināth Sen Dās. An excellent edition of this work has been published by the Baṅgabāsī Office and edited by Harimohan Mukhopādhyāy in 1310 B. S. (1903 A.D.), which also includes additional songs from *Rasa-sāra-saṅgīt*.

exhibit any marked literary characteristics.[1] His short piece.[2]

মনের কথা, সই, এমন অরি।
না কহিলে মরি, তাহা কহিলেও মরি।
যদি না চাহি কহিতে চাহি গোপনে রাখিতে
দহে হৃদি অনলের তেজ সে ধরি॥
কিঞ্চিৎ কহিতে যার কি কব যাতনা তার
রসনা দহিয়া যায় বল কি করি॥[3]

is so much better than the rest that it would be hardly fair to quote anything else unless we could quote a good deal more.

The minor songsters.

The minor group of lyrists and songsters in this section are not always strictly speaking writers of *tappās*; but they wrote on amatory, devotional and other themes. It is unprofitable to take them in detail; for none of them, not even Śrīdhar Kathak or Kālī Mirjā, could approach Nidhu Bābu in variety, extent or power, though all of them show more or less a touch of the natural vocal quality. Their songs (excepting perhaps some deservedly popular pieces of Śrīdhar) do not possess the rare merit of uniting the grace and imagery of the lyric to the music and fashion of song. They are hardly literary and are often carelessly made: they are

[1] His আমি নারী, হর নহি, শুনহে মদন। বিনা অপরাধে বধ রাধার জীবন॥ etc. is often praised but is chiefly imitative of Jayadeb's হৃদিবিষলতাহারো নায়ং ভুজঙ্গমনায়কঃ, of Bidyāpati's কতিহ মদন তনু দহসি হমারি। হাম নহুঁ শঙ্কর হুঁ বরনারী and of Rām Basu's হর নই হে, আমি যুবতী, কেন জ্বালাতে এলে রতিপতি। The idea is conventional.

[2] Besides the Baṅgabāsī edition, *Prītigīti* gives a good selection of Rādhāmohan's noticeable pieces.

[3] *Saṅgīt-taraṅga* (Bangabāsī edition), p. 20.

not meant to be read with tone and feeling but really demand to be sung. And what has been said with regard to the musical quality of the songs of the Kabiwalas apply with greater force to *ṭappā*-writers who were primarily musicians.

Śrīdhar Kathak.

Of these later *ṭappā*-writers, Śrīdhar Kathak stands next to Nidhu Bābu in popularity, poetic merit and probably in chronology. Informations about his life and character are uncertain, indefinite and mostly unrealiable. He was born in the village of Bānsbeḍia, Hughli, probably in 1816 (1223 B. S.). His father was Pundit Ratankṛṣṇa Śiromaṇi and his grandfather was the famous kathak Lālchānd Bidyābhuṣan. Śrīdhar himself was a kathak of considerable power having learnt the art from Kālīcharaṇ Bhaṭṭāchāryya of Berhampore but from his youth he was attached by natural proclivities to *kabi* and *pāṁchāli* parties. The songs which are now attributed to Śrīdhar are, however, all of the *ṭappā* type and for these he is justly celebrated. Unfortunately the rival reputation Rāmnidhi has created much confusion and led to the general attribution of many of Śrīdhar's songs to Rāmnidhi and it is almost impossible to-day to disentangle satisfactorily this question of disputed authorship. The famous song

His *ṭappās* curiously mixed up with those of Nidhu Bābu.

ভালবাসিবে বলে ভালবাসিনে।
আমার স্বভাব এই তোমা বই আর জানিনে॥
বিধুমুখে মধুর হাসি দেখ্‌তে বড় ভালবাসি
তাই শুধু দেখিতে আসি দেখা দিতে আসিনে॥

is popularly assigned to Nidhu Bābu—for none but Nidhu Bābu was supposed capable of producing such a beautiful

piece ; but the song really belongs to Śrīdhar and is not included in Nidhu Bābu's *Gītaratna*. The same remark applies to two other fine songs which deserve to be quoted here—

ঐ যায়, যায়, চায় ফিরে সজল নয়নে
ফিরাও গো, ফিরাও গো ওরে অমিয়-বচনে।
হেরি ওর অভিমান দূরে গেল মোর মান
অস্থির হতেছে প্রাণ প্রতি পদার্পণে ॥

তবে প্রেমে কি সুখ হতো।
আমি যারে ভালবাসি সে যদি ভালবাসিতো।
কিংশুক শোভিত ঘ্রাণে কেতকী কণ্টক হীনে
ফুল ফুটিত চন্দনে ইক্ষুতে ফল ফলিতো।
প্রেমসাগরেরি জল হত যদি সুশীতল
বিচ্ছেদ বাড়বানল তাহে যদি না থাকিতো ॥

The number of Śrīdhar's songs which have come down to us is very limited and not more than one hundred songs may be found attributed to him in different anthologies.[1]

His quality as a song-writer.

Śrīdhar is undoubtedly one of the finest *ṭappā*-writers of this period, although he moves within a very limited and inferior range. Most of his songs speak of the bitterness of disappointed love and breathe a note of tender passion marked more or less by absence of rhetorical

[1] In *Baṅgabhāṣār Lekhak* (vol. i, p. 360) mention is made of 169 songs by Śrīdhar; Love-songs 121, and songs on Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā 35, Śyāmābiṣayak 4, Gaurībiṣayak 9, besides some miscellaneous *padas*. But these have not yet been published. Altogether nearly a hundred songs will be found assigned to Śrīdhar in different anthologies and selections.

subtlety and presence of lyrical directness. Śrīdhar, like most of his contemporaries, is often slipshod and careless; but he is always forceful and direct. His faults are faults common to the group—of too rapid composition, diffuseness and a certain share of the tricks and mannerisms of current verse: yet when he beats his music out, it has a touching and tender quality. In his best songs the words are few but the linked sweetness of his long-drawn-out melody has a charm of its own. We have quoted some of his well-known songs; here are two from his less known pieces.

আমার মনোবেদনা কভু জানাওনা তায়
শুনিলে আমার দুঃখ সে পাছে বেদনা পায়।
না বাসে না বাসে ভাল ভাল থাকে সেই ভাল
শুনিলে মঙ্গল তার তবুও প্রাণ জুড়ায়॥

যাবত জীবন রবে কারে ভালবাসিব না।
ভালবেসে এই হলো ভালবাসার কি লাঞ্ছনা।
আমি ভালবাসি যারে সে কভু ভাবে না মোরে
তবে কেন তারি তরে নিয়ত পাই এ যন্ত্রণা।
ভালবাসা ভুলে যাব মনেরে বুঝাইব
পৃথিবীতে আর যেন কেউ কারে ভালবাসে না॥[1]

It is impossible to overrate the quality displayed in the above passages, and one can, therefore, understand easily how Śrīdhar's songs got so curiously mixed up with Nidhu Bābu's masterpieces. But, inspite of this extraordinary charm, Śrīdhar is a singularly unequal poet and shines best in a volume of selection. Many passages are mere fustian; others have a beauty not often

[1] In *Premahār* (a collection of love-songs) ed. Kṣīrod Chandra Rāy (1886), pp. 94-95 the text of this song has a slightly different wording.

surpassed. Śrīdhar remains, therefore, a poet great by snatches.

We pass briefly over the name of Kālidās Chaṭṭopādhyāy (better known as Kālī Mirjā) a *ṭappā*-writer of tolerable power and musician of great repute, who flourished in the early years of the 19th century. His songs, both for their substance and their music, had obtained such instant and merited currency that when Kṛṣṇānanda Byās Rāgasāgar compiled his enormous cyclopædia of songs in 1845 (1252 B.S.),[1] he thought it fit to include more than 250 songs of Kālī Mirjā's composition. He was the son of one Bijayrām Chaṭṭopādhyāy, a native of Guptipāḍā which was at one time the seat of Hindu learning. Kālidās is said to have learnt music in Benares, Lukhnow and Delhi; and his appellation *Mirjā* is said to betoken his high skill and proficiency in that art. After residing for some time with Pratāpchandra of Burdwan, he came to Calcutta where he lived thereafter under the magnificent patronage of Gopīmohan Ṭhākur. He passed his last days in the sacred city of Benares and died there, before 1825.

Kālidās Chaṭṭopādhyāy (Kālī Mirjā).

Kālī Mirjā composed songs on a variety of topics, secular as well as religious, of which his *ṭappās* and *śyāmābiṣayak* songs obtained considerable reputation. In his devotional songs, he follows the tradition of Rām-prasād and in one or two pieces he has been able to

Character of his songs.

[1] The entire work, *Saṅgīt-rāga-kalpadrum* was published between 1842-49; the volume containing Bengali songs was printed in 1845. The date given in the introductory portion of Kālī Mirjā's *Gītalaharī*, published by Amṛtalal Bandyopādhyāy in 1904, is incorrect. See preface to *Saṅgīt-rāga-kalpadrum* (Sāhitya Pariṣat edition, vol. iii, p. 2).

catch the spirit, if not the devotional ecstasy, of the earlier devotee

আরে মন তুই মজে যারে কালীপদ সুধারসে
চতুর্ব্বর্গ ফল পাবি মুক্ত হবি ভব-পাশে।
চরণ কমল-দ্বন্দ হও তাহে মকরন্দ
ত্যজ আর অন্য ধন্দ, কালী কালী সুখের ভাষে॥

শবাসনার কি বাসনা আমারে এ প্রবঞ্চনা
কালি কালি যত ডাকি তত কর বিড়ম্বনা।
যতই ভাবি অন্তরে ততই হও অন্তরে
দিতে চাই গো মন তোরে, মন মনে থাকে না॥[1]

The same level and average quality also characterises his songs on Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa and his *ṭappās*. His songs are uniformly pedestrian, if not always flat and dull, and monotonously destitute of the peculiar touch of phrasing, the eternising influence of style which characterises the songs of Nidhu Bābu or Śrīdhar Kathak. The only feature—a feature however which is hardly engaging—is his tendency towards the traditional rhetorical style and his fondness for tasteless conceits and crude devices of punning and alliteration. There is more of conventional poetical imagery than of natural emotion in his songs. One illustration would suffice[2]

অন্তরে অন্তর তারে করিব কেমনে সই।
মনে নাহি মনে করে তাহার মন্তর বই।
যদি হয় কথান্তর নাহি হয় মতান্তর
আঁখি ঝরে নিরন্তর যদি দুরন্তর হই॥

[1] *Gītalahari*, pp. 56 and 64.

[2] *Ibid*, p. 102.

This brings us practically to the end of the group of *ṭappā*-writers[1] who chronologically belong to our period, although in matters of date and chronology we are not on absolutely firm and safe ground. The tradition, however, was carried on beyond the middle of the 19th century. In *Saṅgīt-rāga-kalpadrum*, published in 1845, we find the songs of Kālidās Gaṅgopādhyāy, Śibchandra Sarkār, Śib Chandra Rāy and Ānanda Nārāyaṇ Ghoṣ and Aśutoṣ Deb (Chhātu Bābu), all of whom must have flourished in their poetical glory between 1820 and 1840. Later on we get Jagannāth Prasād Basu Mallik of Āndul, Kāśī Prasād Ghoṣ of Simlā, Calcutta, author of *Gītāvalī* and of a large number of English lyrics, Jadunāth Ghoṣ of Belur, who wrote *Saṅgīt Manoraṅjan*, Ramāpati Bandyopādhyāy, author of *Saṅgītmūlādarśa*, Hari Mohan Rāy, Rām Chānd Bandyopādhyāy, Dayāl Chānd Mitra and a host of others. This minor poetry is of a strangely composite order vacillating between the finest poetic quality of Nidhu Bābu and the dull flatness of Kālī Mirjā. Instead of dealing with these latter-day songsters in a piecemeal fashion here, we reserve them for detailed treatment in the next volume; for the importance of this movement did not end with the period with which we are at present concerned but continued to be sufficiently prominent even in the next quarter of this century.

Later group of *ṭappā*-writers.

It would be convenient to notice here briefly the devotional songs of this period, which, though dealing as they

[1] Gopāl Uḍe does not properly belong to this group of *Baiṭhaki-ṭappā*-writers. He was a *yātrāwāla* and although his songs go by the name of *ṭappā*, in quality and kind they belong to a different species.

do with an entirely different theme and forming a group by themselves, represent a phase of song-writing of this period closely connected with the writing of the passionate love-lyrics. From individualistic and secular love-songs to the ecstatic and personal expression of religious longing is but a step, the intermediate stage being supplied by the songs bearing upon the personal-impersonal theme of the loves of Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā. But it is remarkable that while *ṭappā*-writers like Nidhu Bābu, Śrīdhar Kathak or Kālī Mirjā often pass on from love-lyrics to devotional songs, the writers of devotional songs like Rām Prasād or Kamalākānta, on the other hand, seldom condescend to the more mundane theme of personal love-lyrics.

Devotional songs

The most interesting bulk of these devotional songs relates to the worship of divinity under the special image of *Śakti*, although there are several songs which relate to other religious cults. Its origin must be traced to the recrudescence and ultimate domination of the *Śakti*-cult and Śākta form of literature in the 18th century, which in its turn traced its origin in general to the earlier *tāntric* form of worship. Rām-prasād, the greatest exponent of this kind of song-writing of this period, began his career however as the author of the conventional *Bidyāsundar*; but even through the erotic atmosphere of this half-secular narrative poem, the devotional fervour of the Śākta-worshipper expresses itself. The same may be said, although in a lesser degree, of Bhārat Chandra who was also the author of a few devotional *Śākta* lyrics. But when Rām-prasād later on realised the superiority of his ecstatic religious effusions as something more

relating to *Śakti*-worship.

Rām-prasād; his transition from *Bidyāsundār* to devotional songs.

congenial to the trend of his life and genius and burst forth even in the pages of his more studied and literary narrative poem—

গ্রন্থ যাবে গড়াগড়ি গানে হব ব্যস্ত

the literary world began to be flooded with the tuneful melodies of religious ecstasy as a reaction from the comparatively arid thraldom of conventional verse.

The Śākta and the Baiṣṇab poets; their different literary methods.

The conflict between the Śākta and the Baiṣṇab sects obtains in Bengali literature from time immemorial. As on the one hand the Baiṣṇab poets, steeped in the speculative, mystic and emotional realisations of the *Śrīmadbhāgabat* were giving a poetic shape of their religious longings in terms of human passion and emotion and figuring forth the divinity as an ideal of love, were attempting to bind the infinite through the finite bonds of life's sweetest and best affections, the Śāktas on the other hand were singing the praise and describing the glory of *Ādyā Śakti* through their *Chaṇḍī maṅgal* poems. Regarded as literary ventures, these longer and more studied efforts of the Śākta writers, no doubt, hold a conspicuous place in ancient Bengali literature but the Śāktas could not attain the lyric predominance and passionate enthusiasm of Baiṣṇab song-writers: for there is a better scope for losing oneself in poetic rapture in dealing with *bātsalya*, *sakhya*, *dāsya*, *mādhurya* and the other familiar and daily felt emotional states than in describing in a sober narrative form the feats and glories of the particular deity. The *tantras* no doubt inculcate the worship of the deity under the image of the Mother; but no votary of the cult before Rām-prasād realised the exceedingly poetic possibilities of this form of adoration. We

Adoration of godhead as the Mother, first realised by Rām-prasād.

cannot indeed definitely state whether Rām-prasād was the first poet and devotee to realise this: for we find contemporaneously with him a host of such song-writers as, either independently or influenced by him, wrote in the same strain. Rājā Kṛṣṇachandra himself was a composer of such songs and we find the literary tradition maintained in the royal family by his two sons Śibchandra and Śambhūchandra, as well as inferior members of the same family like Narachandra, Śrīśchandra, Nareśchandra and others. A few songs of this style still remains which contain the *bhaṇitā* of Māhārājā Nanda Kumār. It cannot be said that all these song-writers were inspired by the example and influence of Rām-prasād; on the contrary, they might be following a course of religious and literary development which had begun independently but which was made so resplendent by the superior faith and genius of Rām-prasād. Whatever might be the fact, it cannot be denied that it was in Rām-prasād that this new form of adoration of the Supreme Being under the image of the Mother—a form naturally congenial to the Bengali temperament—finds its characteristic expression and discovers a new, easy and natural mode of religious realisation through fine songs, reflecting intense religious fervour in the exceedingly human language of filial affection. The image of divine motherhood, to Rām-prasād and his followers, is not a mere abstract symbol of divine grace or divine chastisement but it becomes the means as well as the end of a definite spiritual realisation. Rising to the radiant white-heat of childlikeness, these poets realise in the emotions of the child the emotions of a devotee. Like the child, the poet is now grave, now gay, now petulant, now despairing, not with the capricious purposelessness of a child but with the deep intensity of purposeful devotion. Thus, not only Rām-prasād in his numerous songs but even his follower, Kumār

Narachandra could indulge in such intimate, familiar yet significant expressions towards his special divinity:—

নেংটা মেয়ের যত আদর জটে ব্যাটা ত বাড়ালে
নইলে কেন ডাক্‌তে হবে দিবানিশি মা মা বলে ॥
শ্রীরাম জগতের গুরু জটে ব্যাটা তাঁর গুরু
আপনি কেটা বুঝলেনাকো রইল শ্যামার চরণতলে ॥
বিষম পাগল জটে ব্যাটা শ্মশান ত তার মৌরস পাটা
(আবার) বেটীর এম্‌নি বুকের পাটা জটের বুকে পা-টা দিলে ॥

These spiritual effusions of devout heart, therefore, are in a sense beyond criticism; and in order to appreciate these songs one must realise the entire mentality of these devotee-poets, their systems of belief, the earnestness, warmth and vigour of their simple faith, the transport and exaltation of their spiritual mysticism. What these poets give us is not the meditative speculation of systematic philosophers, nor the intellectual subtlety of trained logicians nor the theological commonplaces of religious preachers, but the life-long realisation of an intensely spiritual nature. The songs, therefore, represent not a professional effort but a born gift, or a gift acquired through religious worship and aspiration. It is, however, a gift or an enthusiasm, which is in fact an inspiration, a mood of divine madness which draws from visible and familiar things an intuition of unknown realities. Its treatment of the facts of religious experience is not the less appealing but all the more artistic because it is so sincere and genuine, because it awakens a sense of conviction in ourselves. The temper is essentially that of a secular lyric. It is not transcendental nor beyond the sphere of artistic expression because the inspired artist makes us feel the reality and universality of his individual passion, and the

Character of these songs.

mystery of his mystery stands clear and visible in its own familiar light before our eyes.

This transfiguration of the primeval instinct of filial affection of

A child crying in the night
A child crying for the light

into a religious phantasy or poetic rapture is a remarkable achievement of Rām-prasād's songs. The incommunicable communion between the human soul and the divine is communicated through the exceedingly familiar and authentic intensity of the child's feeling for the mother. This new standpoint vivifies religion with a human element and lifts one of the primitive elements of human nature into the means of glorious exaltation. It brings back colour and beauty into religious life and appeals to the imagination and the feelings. Its essential truth lies in its appeal for a more emotional religion and in its protest against the hard intellectuality of doctrines and dogmas. It is not the isolated expression of moral or religious ideas but its fusion into a whole in one memorable personality, expressing itself in a distinctly novel yet familiar mode of utterance, which makes these songs so remarkable. The *tāntric* form of worship has its terrible as well as its beautiful aspect; in these latter-day Śākta writers we find an assertion of the rights of the emotional and the æsthetic in human nature. In this view the achievements of Rām-prasād, ably seconded by other devotional songsters who followed in the line, is of a kind which most of the great religious or moral leaders of the race in some way or other performed and which opened up a new source of elevating joy.

Transfiguration of a primitive human instinct, and appeal for a more emotional form of religion.

But in this idea of the Divine Mother (*mātṛbhāb*) which primarily follows the authority of the *tantras* and the

natural mental bent of the age and the race and the individual, Rām-prasād was not little influenced, directly or indirectly, by the Baiṣṇab idea of *bātsalya*. Throughout the history of the Sākta and Baiṣṇab conflict we find, no doubt, the two sects directly antagonistic to each other and in Bhārat Chandra, even in Rām-prasād himself, we find the virulence of a militant sectarian zeal. But, as on the one hand, we find a Baiṣṇab poet like Chaṇḍīdās making use of *tāntric* imagery and *tāntric* idea of *ṣaṭchakra-sādhan*,[1] on the other we see Rām-prasād, a confirmed Śākta poet, considerably influenced by Baiṣṇab ideas in his *Kālī-kīrtan* and *Kṛṣṇakīrtan*. Not only does he imitate in places the characteristic diction and imagery of Baiṣṇab *padābalīs* but he deliberately describes the *goṣṭha*, *rās*, *milan* of Bhagabatī in imitation of the *bṛndāban-līlā* of Śrīkṛṣṇa. It does not concern us here whether the girl Pārbatī figures in a better artistic light with a *beṇu* and *pāchanbāḍi* in her hand or whether the picture deserves the sarcastic comments of Āju Gosvāmī[2]; what we need note is that here as well as in his *āgamanī* songs, Rām-prasād is unmistakably utilising Baiṣṇab ideas. This imitation of the *bṛndāban-līlā* or of the *bātsalya bhāba* of Yaśodā for Bāla Gopāl was, however, not wholly isolated,

Influence of Baiṣṇab ideas

and imitation of Bṛndābanlīla.

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[1] কিবা কারিকরের আজব কারিকুরি।
তার মধ্যে ছয় পদ্ম রাখিয়াছে পুরি॥
সহস্রারে হয় পদ্ম সহস্রক দল
তার পরে মণিপুর পরম শিবের স্থল।

quoted from Chaṇḍīdās in *Bīr-bhūmi* (new series) vol. ii, p. 15, which see for a masterly exposition of *Prasādī sangīt*.

[2] না জানে পরম তত্ত্ব কাঁটালের আমসত্ত্ব মেয়ে হয়ে ধেনু কি চরাবে। ইত্যাদি

sporadic or objectless. It indicated a general desire with these poets of the 18th century to afford a common ground of reconciliation and good feeling between the two antagonistic sects. There is no distinction in reality, says Rām-prasād in many a song, between Biṣṇu and Śakti, between Kālī and Kṛṣṇa.

Its object.

প্রসাদ ভণে অভেদজ্ঞানে কালরূপে মেশামেশি।
ওরে একে পাঁচ পাঁচেই এক মন কর না দ্বেষাদ্বেষি॥

This attempt at removing *dveṣādveṣi* (ill-blood) and at establishing the ultimate identity of the different images of the godhead is at the root of the later song of Kamalākānta.

জান না রে মন পরম কারণ শ্যামা কভু মেয়ে নয়।
সে যে মেঘের বরণ করিয়া ধারণ কখন কখন পুরুষ হয়॥
কভু বাঁধে ধড়া কভু বাঁধে চূড়া ময়ূরপুচ্ছ শোভিত তায়।
কখন পার্ব্বতী কখন শ্রীমতী কখন রামের জানকী হয়॥
হয়ে এলোকেশী করে লয়ে অসি দানবচয়ে করে সভয়।
(কভু) ব্রজপুরে আসি বাজাইয়া বাঁশী ব্রজবাসী-মন হরিয়া লয়॥
যেরূপে যে জন করয়ে ভজন সেইরূপে তার মানসে রয়।
কমলাকান্তের হৃদি-সরোবরে কমলমাঝে কমল উদয়॥

These devotional songsters in general and their precursor Rām-prasād in particular, therefore, established, through the current from of *Śakti*-worship, tempered by natural human ideas derived from the no less human Baiṣṇab poets, a peculiar form of religious-poetic communion and, realising this in their own life removed from the turbid atmosphere of controversy,

Originality of Rām-prasād and his followers.

they expressed the varieties of their religious experience in touching songs accessible to all. There is no other conspicuous instance of this type of *Śakti*-worship through the *Māṭṛ-bhāba* in ancient literature. The classical example king Suratha's propitiation of the *Ādyā Śakti* described in the *Mārkaṇḍeya Chaṇḍī* is altogether of a different kind; nor could the earlier Bengali Chaṇḍī-authors, who indulged themselves in hymns or elaborate narratives of praise, anticipate the sentiment of tender devotion and half-childish solicitation of Rām-prasād.[1] In this respect the originality of Rām-prasād is undoubted and it exalts him to a place all his own.

These songs accessible to all without discrimination.

The Baiṣṇab poets, again, describe in their exquisite lyrics a type of love which is lifted beyond the restrictions of social convention and their love-lyrics, passionate and often sensuous, may, in the uninitiated, excite worldly desires instead of inspiring a sense of freedom from worldly attachments. The songs of Rām-prasād and his followers, on the other hand, are free from this dangerous tendency. Although these simple and tender longings for the Mother may not, in thought and diction, compare favourably with the finer outbursts of the Baiṣṇab poets, yet they are accessible indiscriminately to the uninitiated as well as the initiated, to the sinner as well as to the saint, to the ignorant as well as to the learned. They constitute the common property of all, and as in the case of the tender love of the mother, every human child has an equal claim to share it.

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[1] The exceedingly humanised picture of Gaurī or Dūrgā in Rāmeśvar's *Śibāyan* or even in Bhārat Chandra's *Annadāmaṅgal* represents an altogether *different* phase of perhaps the same humanising tendency in contemporary literature.

But this exceedingly difficult task of writing religious songs which should be at the same time artistic and passionate has its own dangers and pitfalls. When the inspiration does not reach its high-water mark, the resulting song is apt to be either dull and flat or laboured and artificial. There is nothing like the dulness of a religious writer at his dullest. This trait, now and then noticeable in Rām-prasād himself, is often very marked in the less inspired song-writers who accompanied or followed him. There is not much in these inferior poets (always with exceptions, of course) which is worth detailed study or attention and we shall pass over them as briefly as possible. Of the two sons of Rājā Kṛṣṇa-chandra, Rājā Śibchandra and Kumār Śambhūchandra, the latter is a better poet, no doubt, but his productions are stilted and conventional and are of too trifling a quantity to deserve any further comment. The production of Kumār Narachandra, a member of the same family, are however more abundant and are of a better quality, though not absolutely free from the same trait. He could reproduce the spirit and even the language of Rām-prasād pretty well. We select three of his songs (beside one which we have already quoted) which are not so well-known as they ought to be.

Dulness and artificiality of the less inspired successors of Rām-prasād.

Rājā Śibchandra and Kumār Sambhūchandra.

যে ভাল করেছ কালি আর ভালতে কাজ নাই,
ভালয় ভালয় বিদায় দে মা আলোয় আলোয় চলে যাই ॥
মা তোমার করুণা যত বুঝিলাম অবিরত
ডাকিলাম কত শত কপাল ছাড়া পথ নাই ॥
জঠরে দিয়েছ স্থান করোনা মা অপমান
কিসে হবে পরিত্রাণ নরচন্দ্র ভাবে তাই ॥

কেন মিছে মা মা কর মায়ের দেখা পাবে নাই
থাকলে আসি দিতো দেখা সর্ব্বনাশী বেঁচে নাই ॥
শ্মশানে মশানে কত পীঠস্থান ছিল যত
খুঁজে হলাম ওষ্ঠাগত কেন আর যন্ত্রণা পাই ॥
বিমাতার তীরে গিয়ে কুশপুতুল দাহাইয়ে
অশৌচান্তে পিণ্ড দিয়ে কালাশৌচে কাশী যাই ॥
দ্বিজ নরচন্দ্র ভণে মায়ের জন্য ভাবনা কেনে
মা নাম গেছে শিব ত আছে তরিবার ভাবনা নাই ॥

যে হয় পাষাণের মেয়ে তার হৃদে কি দয়া থাকে।
দয়াহীনা না হলে কি নাথি মারে নাথের বুকে ॥
দয়াময়ী নাম জগতে দয়ার লেশ নাই তোমাতে
গলে পর মুণ্ডমালা পরের ছেলের মাথা ঠুকে ॥
মা মা বলে যত ডাক শুনে ত মা শুনে নাক
নরা এম্‌নি নাথি-খেকো তবু দুর্গা বলে ডাকে ॥

Such simple yet direct utterance become rarer as we pass on to later writers of this group. The following songs which bear the *bhaṇitā* of Nandakumār is supposed by some to be the composition of Nanda Kiśor Rāy, Dewān of Burdwan Rāj, but may possibly be a solitary song of Mahārāj Nandakumār accidentally preserved.

Dewān Nandakiśor Rāy.

ভুবন ভুলালি গো ভুবনমোহিনী।
মূলাধারে মহোৎপলে বীণাবাদ্য-বিনোদিনী ॥
শরীরে শারীরী যন্ত্রে সুষুম্নাদি ত্রয় তন্ত্রে
গুণভেদে মহামন্ত্রে তিনগ্রাম-সঞ্চারিণী ॥
আধারে ভৈরবাকার ষড়্‌দলে শ্রীরাগ আর
মণিপুরেতে মল্লার বসন্তে হৃৎপ্রকাশিনী ॥

বিশুদ্ধ হিল্লোলস্বরে কর্ণাটিক আস্তাপুরে
তাল মান লয় সুরে ত্রিসপ্তস্বরভেদিনী ॥
মহামায়া মোহপাশে বদ্ধ কর অনায়াসে
তত্ত্ব লয়ে তত্ত্বাকাশে স্থির আছে সৌদামিনী ॥
শ্রীনন্দকুমার কয় তত্ত্ব না নিশ্চয় হয়
তব তত্ত্বগুণত্রয় কাঁকি মুখে আচ্ছাদিনী ॥[1]

This song is quoted here not so much for its historic interest nor for any special merit but as a specimen of the artificial and tedious style of later poets. The same tendency of indulging in symbolism, didactics and banalities under a spiritual glamour is also remarkably noticeable in the songs of Dewān Raghunāth Rāy of Burdwan, a brother of Nandakiśor; but Raghunāth was not a Śākta of the narrow type and addressed several songs to Kṛṣṇa as well, in some of which he maintains the eventual identity of this Baiṣṇab deity with the special divinity of his adoration. It is hardly necessary to quote specimens but the following song[2] is the nearest approach to the style of Rām-prasād which had been all along the deservedly recognised standard.

Dewān Raghunāth Rāy. 1750-1836.

পড়িয়ে ভবসাগরে ডুবে মা তনুর তরী।
মায়া-ঝড় মোহ-তুফান ক্রমে বাড়ে গো শঙ্করী ॥
একে মন-মাঝি আনাড়ি তাতে ছ-জন গোঁয়ার দাঁড়ী
কুবাতাসে দিয়ে পাড়ি হাবুডুবু খেয়ে মরি।
ভেঙ্গে গেল ভক্তির হাল ছিঁড়ে গেল শ্রদ্ধার পাল
তরী হল বান্‌চাল্‌ বল এখন কি করি।
উপায় না দেখি আর অকিঞ্চন ভেবে সার
তরঙ্গে দিয়ে সাঁতার দুর্গানামের ভেলা ধরি ॥[2]

[1] The *bhaṇitā* has Nandakumār and not Nandakiśor.

[2] The *bhaṇitā* of Raghunāth in these songs is অকিঞ্চন.

Thus Burdwan, like Nadiyā, had been for a long time the centre of these activities, and we find even Mahārājā Mahatābchānd, who was a song-writer of no mean merit, carrying on this literary tradition till his death in 1897. Of this Burdwan group the most famous and indeed the most remarkable poet is Kamalākānta Bhaṭṭāchāryya, a native of Ambikānagar in Kalnā who subsequently removed to Koṭālhāṭ in Burdwan and lived under the royal patronage of Maharājā Tejaschandra. Of the later group of devotional poets, Kamalākānta approaches Rām-prasād very closely in tone and feeling and style. Mahatābchānd printed in 1857 from the poet's own manuscript nearly 250 songs which have been thus beautifully preserved. This collection was reprinted in 1885 by Śrīkānta Mallik in Calcutta under the title *Kamalākānta Padāvalī*[1] and it certainly deserves reprint again.

Kamalākānta Bhaṭṭāchāryya.

It is impossible within the limited scope of our plan to analyse these three hundred songs in detail or to quote extensive specimens which alone would illustrate the depth, variety and beauty of Kamalākānta's songs. Like the songs of his great predecessor Rām-prasād, his songs reveal to us the inward history of his spiritual life, the various stages of his religious experience from worship and adoration to the attainment of the state of highest felicity. It is not his meditative speculation nor his theological tenets nor the vague coating of symbolism in his songs which constitute their charm; over and above all these tower his spiritual sense, his imagination and his emotions, his extraordinary personality; and the palpitating humanity which vivifies every line imparts a soul-felt meaning to his devotional songs. He expresses common needs, common

[1] A copy of this was lent to me by the Sāhitya Pariṣat Library.

thoughts, and every-day emotions of the religious man; and if he is a mystic, his mysticism is not of the esoteric order. It is difficult to quote specimens when one must confine oneself to a limited number but the following songs, well-known as they are, are quoted to make them better known.

আর কিছু নাই শ্যামা মা তোর কেবল দুটি চরণ রাঙ্গা।
শুনি তাও নিয়েছেন ত্রিপুরারি দেখে হলাম সাহস ভাঙ্গা॥
জ্ঞাতি বন্ধু সুত দারা সুখের সময় সবাই তারা
বিপদকালে কেউ কোথা নাই ঘরবাড়ী ওড় গায়ের ডাঙ্গা॥
নিজগুণে যদি রাখ করুণা নয়নে দেখ
নইলে জপে তপে তোমায় পাওয়া সে সব কথা ভূতের সাঙ্গা॥
কমলাকান্তের কথা মাকে বলি মনের ব্যথা
আমার জপের মালা ঝুলি কাঁথা জপের ঘরে রইল টাঙ্গা॥ [1]

কালি সব ঘুচালি লেঠা।
শ্রীনাথের লিখন আছে যেমন রাখবি কি না রাখবি সেটা॥
তোমার যারে কৃপা হয় তার সৃষ্টিছাড়া রূপের ছটা।
তার কটিতে কৌপিন যোড়ে গায়ে ছাই আর মাথায় জটা॥
শ্মশান পেলে সুখে ভাস তুচ্ছ বাস মণি কোঠা
আপনি যেমন ঠাকুর তেমন্ ঘুচলোনাক সিদ্ধি ঘোঁটা॥
দুখে রাখ সুখে রাখ করবো কি আর দিয়ে খোঁটা
আমি দাগ দিয়ে পরেছি যখন পুঁছতে নারি সাধের ফোঁটা॥
জগৎ জুড়ে নাম দিয়েছ কমলাকান্ত কালীর বেটা
এখন মায়ে পোয়ে কেমন ব্যাভার ইহার মর্ম্ম জান্‌বে কেটা॥ [2]

One characteristic note of these songs is its sincerity, a sincerity which redeems even the slightest song from insignificance and confers on the finer pieces an importance

[1] *Kamalākānta Padābali*, p. 29. [2] *Ibid*, p. 39.

of a different order from that which attaches to even the most brilliant productions of his contemporaries. The popular opinion which places Kamalākānta next to Rām-prasād is fully justified, and we conclude by quoting the lines of Nīlāmbar Mukhopādhyāy, a later poet, who eulogises Kamalākānta and Rām-prasād in the same breath.

মায়ের প্রজা হওরে আসি।
মায়ের সমভাব নাই কমি বেশি ॥
রামপ্রসাদ এক পাটা পেয়ে মহস্থান করেছে কাশী
কমলাকান্ত ভেক নিয়েছে শ্যামা ভাবছেন বোসে
আবার কোথায় পাব কাশী ॥

CHAPTER XII

Miscellaneous Writers in the Old Style.

The period of interregnum in poetry which followed upon Bhārat Chandra's death had been, we have seen, essentially a lyric interval in which we find the Kabiwalas, *tappā*-writers and authors of devotional songs creating a body of literature which, if not great in positive achievement, is at least remarkable in the negative quality of marking a natural reaction against the ornate and classical type of literary practice of the 18th century. At the same time the groups of writers mentioned never separate themselves wholly from the traditions of the past nor do they work their way from the older to the newer style of the 19th century. In this sense, they are neither ancient nor modern; neither do they represent the past adequately nor indicate and foretell the future. They were at the same time incapable of great literature; nor were the times suitable for it. They are not, it is true, idle singers of an empty day; but they deal essentially with trifles, though with trifles poetically adorned. Occupying, as they do, an intermediate position between the ancient and the modern writers, they yet afford no natural medium of transition from the school of the past to the school of the present. They create a literature of their own, limited and circumscribed by their own peculiarities and the peculiarities of their circumstances, too old to be entirely new, too new to be entirely old; for although possessing lyric quality, they have little affinity to modern

Writers of the poetical interregnum.

The intermediate position of the lyric songsters, Kabiwalas and others.

lyrists nor can they be definitely affiliated to any recognised school of ancient writers.

But the poets and songsters whom we propose to take up in this chapter, unlike the writers already dealt with, definitely and unmistakably tread in the footsteps of the old-world poets. Their poetic gift move within the narrow compass of conventional art, and though exhibiting widest individual differences, these imitative poets are bound by the common characteristic of belonging to the past, both in form and spirit. Being thus artificially limited, they are hardly original, except in so far as they may vary a single tune by playing it upon the several recognised stops. This department of verse, therefore, is singularly depressing. Except in inspired snatches, there is hardly anything of first-rate quality, and the great bulk of this narrowly imitative literature is flat and tedious. The recognised literary species had been already suffering from exhaustion of material and the declining powers of these belated imitators could hardly impart to them a spark of vivifying force.

Writers dealt with in this chapter are however 'relics' or 'survivals' of earlier days, and belong in spirit and form to the past.

Want of subject-matter and of capacity for original achievement is precisely the defect of this poetry. In the first place, we have a group of writers who follow the time-honoured tradition of translating the Sanscrit *Rāmāyaṇ*, *Mahābhārat* and *Śrīmad-bhāgabat* into the vernacular. Next we have a band of minor poets—some of them not merely minor but insignificant—who wrote verse-tales of the erotic type in imitation of Bhārat Chandra but who could not reproduce his poetry as they could magnify the dull obscenities which unfortunately taint his writings. After them, come a host of miscellaneous songsters—most

Proposed groups of writers.

of them literary nondescripts—among whom we need notice in some detail the authors of *pāñchāli* and *yātrā*.

Translators.

The translators of this period inherited the tradition but lost the art which had made their predecessors Kṛttibās or Kāśīdās immortal. A little before 1760, we have a number of notable translations among which may be mentioned the delightful version of *Gītagobinda* by Giridhar, but after 1760, this department of literature is hardly graced by any remarkable achievement. The translators of this period hardly exhibit any striking literary feature and it would serve no purpose to recapitulate their half-forgotten names. Of these, however, Raghunandan Gosvamī, though not exactly a translator, is remarkable for his re-writing of the themes of *Rāmāyaṇ* and *Bhāgabat*. Raghunandan[1] was, as he himself tells us, born in the village of Māḍo near Mānkar, Burdwan. His dates are not exactly known[2] but he undoubtedly belongs to our period, for Rāj-nārāyaṇ Basu in his *Ekāl O Sekāl* relates how Raghunandan used to come very frequently to Calcutta to meet the lexicographer, Rāmkamal Sen. His two considerable works are *Śrī-Rām-rasāyaṇ* and *Śrī Rādhā-Mādhabodaya*, besides *Gītamālā*, a work on Kṛṣṇa-līlā. Although both these works belong chronologically to a later period—the latter, as its colophon says,[3] having been composed in 1849 and the former

Raghunandan Gosvāmī.

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[1] He gives some account of himself and his family at the conclusion of his *Rām-rasāyaṇ*.

[2] The Bangabāsī edition of his *Rām-rasāyaṇ* gives 1786 (1193 B. S.) as the date of his birth.

[3] শ্রীরাধামাধবয়োঃ প্রীতয়ে ভবতু শাকেঽব্দে ক্ষ্মাসপ্ত সপ্ত ক্ষ্মামিতে বৃষসংক্রমে গঙ্গাতীরে পাণিহাটীগ্রামেঽয়ং পূর্ণতামগাৎ। Published by the author's son Madan Gopāl Gosvāmī in 1890 (1297 B. S.)

probably in 1831[1]—it could be convenient to notice them briefly here. His *Rām-rasāyaṇ*, a voluminous and laborious production, is a tolerably well written version of the *Rāmāyaṇ* chiefly based upon Vālmīki but supplemented from other sources.

Śrī Rām Rasāyaṇ

The language is clear, vigorous and picturesque, although indicating a decided leaning towards Sanscrit words : and the work is composed throughout in the *payār* metre, occasionally diversified by varieties of *tripadī* and other common metres. Strictly speaking, the author is not close or literal or even faithful in his version which is more than a mere translation. There are considerable additions and omissions[2] and the whole theme is treated with a freedom which characterises most of the early translators. The author possesses a marvellous narrative gift which makes his work interesting. It is not accurate to state that the author is merely a learned pundit entirely devoid of poetic gift[3] or power of delineating character but his poetic gift is not equal to his capacity of rhythmical expression and his command over a more or less finished style. In spite of all its faults, it is however a very remarkable production and to regard it as perhaps the best Bengali version of the *Rāmāyaṇ* after Kṛttibās is not altogether unwarranted. In his next work, *Śrī-Rādhā Mādhab odaya*, however, the Baiṣṇab Raghunandan found

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[1] This date is given in the preface to the Baṅgabāsī edition, also in *Baṅgabhāṣār Lekhak*, p. 249. It could not have been, as Dinesh Chandra Sen states (*History*, p. 931), composed in the middle of the 18th century.

[2] Especially in *Uttarkāṇḍa*.

[3] See especially the poetic description in অরণ্যকাণ্ড, ষষ্ঠ পরিচ্ছেদ ; কিষ্কিন্ধাকাণ্ড, ষষ্ঠ পরিচ্ছেদ, and the last chapter on শ্রীরামচন্দ্রের অশোকবন বিহার (উত্তর কাণ্ড)।

a more congenial subject and greater scope for poetical treatment. Its essential theme is the time-worn yet eternally delightful Bṛndābana-līlā of Śrī Kṛṣṇa beginning of Śrī Rādhā's *rāgodaya* (dawning of love) to the final *rās-līlā*. The work, written in a kābya form, is divided into thirty four Ullāsas or chapters in which the whole course of Rādhā's love is elaborately depicted with the rapture of a devotee and the enthusiasm of a poet. The first few chapters which described the germination (*bhābāṅkurodgama*) and growth (*bhābaprakāśa*) of love in Rādhā's heart and the first meeting of the lovers through the contrivance of Paurṇamāsī and Madhumaṅgal—two unique creations of Ragunandan's—are written with considerable skill and poetic spirit.[1] It may be described, in a sense, as a systematic Baiṣṇab Kābya.

and *Śrī Rādhā Mādhabodaya.*

But in both these works, Raghunandan exhibits the same decadent tendency towards finical nicety and metrical dexterity, towards frigid conceits, conventional images and elaborate metaphors, which marks all poetical writing, secular and religious, since the time of Bhārat Chandra. In the narrative portions, Raghunandan is easy and natural enough and shows a considerable gift of quiet humour; but in his poetical description he affects, in common with his contemporary poets, an elaborate and artificial style. His weakness for the display of metrical skill, again, is very marked. Besides *payār* and *tripadī*, he makes use of a large variety of metres—*māljhāp*,

Characteristics of his writings.

[1] For an appreciation of these chapters, see M. M. Haraprasād Śāstrī's article in *Nārāyaṇ*, 1322-23, vol. i, pp. 31-43 and pp. 638-648. Madhumaṅgal, however, is not an original creation of Raghunandan's but he was a more or less conventional figure of the *bidūṣaka* type, in the popular *yātrās*.

ekābalī, lalitā, toṭaka, pajjāhaṭikā. jamaka, tunaka, mātrā bṛttichatuṣpadī, ṣoḍaṣākṣarī kāñchī jamaka, to mention only a few—in his *Rādhā Mādhabodaya.* The following description of the heroine's beauty, although showing considerable skill, is yet conventional and illustrates the author's leaning towards sanscritisation.

সখি দেখহ, সখি দেখহ, নবনীপক মূলে।
ত্যজি অম্বর ধরণীপর নবনীরদ বূলে॥
দলিতাঞ্জন-চয়-গঞ্জন মধুর দ্যুতি জালে।
করু শ্যামল পৃথিবী-তল নভমণ্ডল ভালে॥
চপলা ততি ঝলকে অতি থির অদ্ভুত কাঁতী।
অতি পাণ্ডুর রুচি সুন্দর বিলসে বকপাঁতী॥
সুরভূপতি-ধনুরাকৃতি বহু রঙ্গহি সাজে।
সুষমাযুত অতি অদ্ভুত শশিমণ্ডল রাজে[1]॥

The same remark applies to the following description of Rām in his *Rām-rasāyaṇ*

জয়তি জয়তি ধরণীপতি জয়তি জয়তি রাম।
জনক-নৃপতি-দুহিতা-পতি নির্ম্মল গুণধাম॥
কোটি-মদন-মদ-খণ্ডন পদনখ-রুচিলেশ।
চরণ-কমল-রুচিমণ্ডল জিত-নবদিবসেশ॥
কদলী-তরু-সুললিত উরু মধ্যম অতি ক্ষীণ।
রমণী-মন-মৃগ-নর্ত্তন মণীতট উর পীন॥
বণিতাকুল-ধৃতি-শৈবল-ভঞ্জন-ভুজদণ্ড।
বণিতামদ-তিমির বিপদ কর শশধর তুণ্ড॥
মিথিলা-পতি-তনয়া-ধৃতি-দলন-নয়ন-বাণ।
রঘু-নৃপকুল-বিমল-কমল-বিকশন রবি ভান॥[2]

[1] *Rādhāmādhabodaya*, p. 31. [2] *Rām Rasāyaṇ*, p. 931.

These short lyrics are, however, inadequate for giving an idea of Raghunandan's style; but they will sufficiently indicate both his merits and defects. Raghunandan is by no means a slovenly writer but in his striving after technical perfection, he is often elaborate and artificial. His writings display faultless execution and a great command over the language; but ingenuity and verbal or rhythmic dexterity can never supply perennial nutriment for art. It is only when Raghunandan rises above these prepossessions—and he does this not very seldom—that he exhibits poetical quality of no mean order.

Jay-nārāyaṇ Ghoṣāl, 1751-1821.

Next to Raghunandan, the royal poet Jaynārāyaṇ Ghoṣāl of Bhūkailāś (1751-1821) deserves mention. After spending the greater portion of his life in the service of the Nawāb and in the confidence of the company Jaynārāyaṇ obtained the title of Maharaja Bahadur from the Emperor of Delhi. During his last days, he passed a retired life of religious devotion at Benares where he has left too many traces of his large-hearted benevolence.[1] It was here that he conceived the idea of translating the *Kāśī-Khaṇḍa* into Bengali. The whole history of the undertaking is said forth by Jaynārāyaṇ himself in the last chapter of his work.[2] The translation, begun in 1792, was completed in a hundred chapters (about 11,200 lines) under the joint authorship of Jay-nārāyaṇ, Nṛsiṁha Deb Rāy of Pāṭuli, Jagannāth Mukhopādhyāy, Bakreśvar Pañchānan and several other scholars and poets. After the completion of the hundred chapters, several supplementary chapters, which stand by themselves, were added by

[1] For more details about his life, see *Sāhitya Parisat Patrikā*, vol. vii, p. 1-25; *Sāhitya*, 302 pp. 1491-6: Preface to the Sāhitya Parisat edition of Jaynārāyaṇ's *Kāśī-parikramā*.

[2] See *Kāśī-parikramā* (Sāhitya Parisat edition), Ch. xiii, pp. 222-24.

Jaynārāyaṇ himself, giving a more or less faithful picture of contemporary Benares drawn from the poet's own observation. The work itself is a tedious and laborious compilation but this supplementary account, which is the best part and which has been published separately under the title of *Kāśī-parikramā*, is indeed very interesting as a good specimen of descriptive poetry of this period. The topography and other details of the holy city are given with elaborate care, and in places the descriptions are original, amusing and considerably realistic. The *parikramās* are not rare things in old Bengali literature and we have *Nabadvīpa Parikramā* and *Brajaparikramā* of Narahari Chakrabartī and a prose *Bṛndābana Parikramā* belonging to the 18th century. With these works of the same nature *Kāśī-parikramā* does not compare unfavourably, and as a more or less trustworthy contemporary account of the holy city, the work is certainly valuable. But from the strictly literary point of view, it seems to possess little interest or importance. Jaynārāyaṇ is a facile and methodical versifier but he is hardly a poet. The pictorial nature of his theme no doubt afforded many opportunities for higher poetical flights but the author is so entirely devoid of the soaring gift that he is uniformly and hopelessly pedestrian, although occasionally he gives us undoubtedly vigorous descriptive verses. He has no fancy, no enthusiasm and his over-praised composition[1] is often merely prosaic and always rigidly conventional. The only praise which he deserves relates to the fact that although he adheres both in spirit and form to the traditions and expectations of the time, he yet devotes a stern attention to the realities of scenery and character described. His pictures, however, sadly lack a touch of that light which

His *Kāśī-parikramā*

[1] Dinesh Chandra Sen, in *History*, *loc. cit.* in *Sāhitya*, *loc. cit.*; Nagendranath Basu, preface to the Sāhitya Pariṣat edition of *Kāśī-Parikramā*.

was never on sea and land and which alone could have made them poetic. He is a good photographer but not a painter; and whose considers him as such may appreciate him better. Jaynārāyaṇ's other published work, *Karuṇā-nidān-bilās*,[1] although less known, is much better production. Purporting to be a work devoted to the glorification of the special deity whose image the author had set up at Kāśī and from whom the book derives its name, it really treats of Kṛṣṇalīlā in a refreshingly original and poetical way.

His *Karuṇā-nidāna-bilās.*

Other minor writers, who favoured the old style and belonged to this group, need not and can not in a book like this dealt with at much length. We must, however, mention, if not enlarge upon, a school of poets (or rather versifiers) who were the direct imitators of Bhārat-chandra and continued the style of *Bidyāsundar* even beyond the fifties. Bhārat-chandra, like Rām-prasād in another sphere, had been through his *Bidyāsundar* the ruling power for nearly a century. Writing under the shadow of his genius, this belated group of writers are all servile copyists, reproducing the style and scheme of his *Bidyāsundar* down to minute details but unable to repeat its poetry, they exaggerate its freedom into licence. The details of Sundar's amours, his intrigues, his capture and ultimate union with Bidyā are all repeated anew in a more or less diversified form; but the

School of Bhārat chandra.

Poor and vulgar imitation of *Bidyāsundar.*

[1] A printed copy of this will be found in the Calcutta Imperial Library. The book is included in the list of books published by the School Book Society before 1821. Long, in his article in *Calcutta Review*, xiii. 1850, describes this work as "an account of a new god recently created by a rich native." For an account of the work, see *Sāhitya Pariṣat Patrikā, loc. cit.*

stories are brutally and uncontrolledly indecent, although generally presented like their prototype under the all-atoning garb of religion ; and their heroes are typical Don Juans in the worst sense. The plots are more elaborate and the series of adventures desperately fantastic, though presented with the monotonous sameness of scheme. There are places where Bhārat-chandra is free and coarse enough, but in these his gifted followers attempt to outdo their master in his own ground and hobble along in wretched drawing out of the vulgar parts of the theme, floundering in the mud which they delight in but which is as foul and dull as ever human imagination could conceive. The versification is poor, the descriptions dull and conventional, and there is hardly any elevating poetic touch or other redeeming feature in these verse-tales, which are never graceful but always graceless in one particular. It would be a mistake to attribute all this to the influence of Persian tales, for it is not clear whether these foreign tales were abundantly accessible and well-known to the writers of this generation and even when accessible, it is not clear whether such tales are really as bad as they are often represented to be. The Persian tales, to judge from the specimens which have survived, very seldom sink to that depth of indecent realism where these productions of a degenerate and depraved taste do often wallow ; on the other hand, these elaborate Bengali tales unmistakably bear the stamp of *Bidyāsundar*-style run riot. It would be better to regard them as representing a phase of the development of literary taste in this period of unstability and degeneracy which is also partially reflected in the *khemṭ* of the Kabiwalas, in the grossness of certain aspects of *hāp ākhḍāi*, *tarjā*, *pāñchāli* and other productions of the same type. Most of these verse-tales are now scarce,

Their depraved taste not due to Persian influence.

suppressed by the law and never allowed to be reprinted, and it is not necessary to drag them out of their deserved obscurity ; but there is evidence to show that from the end of the 18th to the middle of the 19th century this prolific literature, outrageous as it is to all taste, obtained considerable favour and currency. The earliest surviving specimen of these tales, however belong to a period posterior to 1825 and do not therefore properly come within the scope of this volume, although it is quite probable that it was preceded by a host of similar productions, belonging to an earlier date, which are now lost to us. Kālī Kṛṣṇa Dās's *Kāminī Kumār*, however, is placed by some at the end of the 18th century, but the earliest printed copy[1] that we have seen bears the date of 1836 ; while *Chandrakānta*, the next well-known piece cannot possibly belong to a much earlier date. Madan Mohan's *Bāsabdattā*, written in the same style but with finer power and greater delicacy, was first published in 1837. These were followed by a host of other works of the same type such as Tārāchāṅd Datta's *Manmatha Kābya* (1844), Munsi Erādot's *Kuraṅga-bhānu* (1845), Umācharaṇ Tribedī's *Madan Mādhurī* (1856), Banamālī Ghoṣāl's *Padmagandhā-upākhyān* (1864), Biśvambhar Dās's *Rajānīkānta* (1870), Gobinda Śīl's *Hemlatā-Ratikānta* (1870 ?) all belonging to a period between 1840 and 1870. This would, therefore, amply indicate that between these dates there was an exuberant growth, if not recrudescence

The most flourishing time of this literature falls outside our period.

[1] The copy in the Sāhitya Pariṣat Library is wanting in the title-page. The date given in the text is the date given in a copy lent to me by a friend but which is now lost and is probably the date of the first edition ; for there is a copy of Kālī Kṛṣṇa's other work, *Mānbhañjan*, in the Sāhitya Pariṣat Library bearing 1856 (Śaka 1778) as the date apparently of the first edition. It is not unlikely therefore to hold that Kālī-Kṛṣṇa's works belong to the period between 1836 and 1856.

of this reactionary literature, helped probably by the reprinting of *Bidyāsundar* in 1836 and 1847.

Miscellaneous poets and songstors.

The miscellaneous poetry of this period is so unmanageably scattered and so diversified that it presents a difficult problem of selection and of satisfactory treatment. Besides the varieties of poems and songs already mentioned, we have multifarious types of rural productions, mostly musical, like *Jārī gān*, *Gājīr gān*, *Hābu gīt*, *Nale gīt*, *Kīrtan gān*, *Dhap saṅgīt*, *Ghetu gān*, *Sāri gān*, *Bāul saṅgīt*, *tārjā gān*, specimens of which have survived in the mouths of the people, although not always accessible in print. Much of this rural literature, composed by inglorious and unknown poets, display, as all rural literature does, a touching quality and a natural poetic sensibility which is interesting to note[1]; but, generally speaking, much of it is not literature at all and must be rigidly excluded.

Authors of *Pāñchāli* and *Yātrā*.

Among these purveyors of ephemeral stuff, the authors of *Pāñchāli* and *Yātrā* must be mentioned, not because they are always worth mention but because their literary pretensions have, rightly or wrongly, always received recognition, as a peculiar form of indigenous literature which at one time had obtained great popularity.

Origin of *Pañchāli* songs.

The origin of *Pāñchāli*-songs of the modern type cannot be definitely traced. Dinesh Chandra Sen, in his two works on Bengali Literature[2] puts forward the brilliant but hardly convincing conjecture that the

[1] Accounts of rural poets and their songs have from time to time appeared in various Bengali journals. For an interesting appreciation of rural literature in general, see Rabīndra Nāth Ṭhakur, *Grāmya Sāhitya* published in his volume on *Lok-Sāhitya*.

[2] *Baṅgabhāṣā O Sāhitya*, 2nd Ed., p. 221; *History of Bengali Language and Literature*, p. 385.

Pāṁchāli (spelling the word as *Pāñchāli*) is ultimately connected with Pañchāl or Kanauj, which he takes to be the birth-place of this kind of song. It may, however, be pointed out that there is no trace of *pāṁchāli*-songs of the modern type (such as those popularised by Dāśarathi Rāy) in ancient literature ; but that the word *Pāṁchāli* it is well known, was used indiscriminately for all sorts of poetical composition which could be recited and which possessed a religious theme. Thus the *Parāgalī Mahābhārat* or the *Mahābhārat* of Nityānanda Ghoṣ is called *bhārat-pāṁchāli* or simply *pāṁchāli* in their respective *bhaṇitās*. Similarly *Kabi-kaṅkaṇ Chaṇḍī* is designated throughout by its author as *pāṁchāli* or *pāṁchāli-prabandha*, and even in a work like *Jagannāth Maṅgal*, Gadādhar Maṇḍal states that he is composing his work in the style of *pāṁchāli*.[1] Thus we have, besides those mentioned above, *Śaṇir pāṁchāli*, *Ṣaṣṭhīr pāṁchāli*, *Manasar pāṁchāli* and in fact *pāṁchālis* written in praise of all the popular deities. These older compositions used to be recited and were therefore suitably arranged for *pālās* or sittings for recitation. But they were not *pāṁchālis* in the modern sense of the term and a distinction must be made between ancient and modern types. Another equally fanciful etymology of the term *pāṁchāli* is given by deriving the word from *pā-chāli* or *pada-chālan* which is taken to indicate that the leader of such a party recited explains and sings his theme by moving about before the assembled audience ; but this interpretation fails to explain the presence of nasal *ṁ* in the word itself. It would seem, however, that the best

Ancient and modern types of *pāṁchāli* must be distinguished.

[1] We also get the word *pāṁchāli-chhanda* and unless the word *chhanda* means style of composition, it must be referred to a peculiar kind of metre.

explanation is that which connects *pāñchāli* with *nāchāḍi* (which was accompanied by dancing and singing) and which regards the term *pāñchāli*, applied to the modern type of popular entertainment, as connoting five (*pāñch*) essential things which must be present in all perfect kinds. What these five elements were cannot be exactly determined but singing (*gān*), music (*sāj-bājāno*), recitation (*chhaḍā-kāṭāna*), poetical rivalry (*gāner laḍāi*) and possibly dancing (*nāch*) more or less accompanied all *pāñchālis* in later times.

As this form of entertainment has practically disappeared from modern Bengal, it would be worth while to quote the following interesting description of a *pāñchāli* performance which, lengthy as it is, is still valuable as coming from one who himself was more or less connected with it and who must have also seen the performance of Dāśu Rāy himself.[1]

নব্যসম্প্রদায়ের গোচরার্থ 'পাঁচালি' বস্তুটা কি, একটু বুঝাইয়া বলা আবশ্যক। যদিও হাফ্-আখ্ড়াই ও দাঁড়া-কবির ন্যায় পাঁচালিতেও দুই দলে সঙ্গীত-সংগ্রাম হইত, কিন্তু উহাদের ন্যায় ইহাতে প্রকৃত প্রস্তাবে উত্তর প্রত্যুত্তর চলিত না। অর্থাৎ কবিতে যেমন এক দল পূর্ব্বপক্ষরূপে আসরী গান গাহিলে অপর দল উত্তর-পক্ষরূপে তৎক্ষণাৎ তাহার জবাব বাঁধিয়া গান করেন, পাঁচালিতে তৎপরিবর্ত্তে পূর্ব্বাভ্যস্ত ছড়া ও গানের লড়াই হইত। যে দল অপেক্ষাকৃত উত্তমরূপে ছড়া কাটাইতে ও গান গাইতে পারিতেন, সেই দলের ভাগ্যেই জয়শ্রী দীপ্তিমতী হইয়া নিশান লাভ ঘটিত।

পাঁচালির প্রণালী এইরূপ: হাফ্-আখ্ড়াইএর ন্যায় তান্পুর, বেহালা, ঢোল, মন্দিরা, মোচং প্রভৃতি ইহার বাদ্যযন্ত্র, ইদানীং ঐক্যতান বাদ্যের ফ্লুটাদি উপকরণও তৎসঙ্গে থাকিত। হাফ্-আখ্ড়াইয়ের ন্যায় বাদ্যের ও

[1] Manomohan Basu, *Mano-mohan Gītāvalī*, pp. 161-163.

লড়াই হইত। সে বাদ্যের নাম "সাজ-বাজানো"। সাজবাজনার পর "ঠাকুরুণ-বিষয়" বা "শ্যামা-বিষয়"। প্রথমেই শ্যামা-বিষয়ক একটি গান সকলে মিলিয়া গাইবার পর কাটান্‌দার উক্ত বিষয়ের ছড়া কাটাইতেন। অর্থাৎ ঐ কার্য্যের উপযুক্ত কোনো এক ব্যক্তি উপযুক্ত অঙ্গ ভঙ্গীর সহিত, কখনো বা সহজ গলায়, কখনো বা এক প্রকার সুরের সাহায্যে, কখনো বা পদ্য, কখনো বা গদ্যের ছুট কথায় উচ্চসুরে ছড়া বিন্যাস করিতেন। কাটাইতে জানিলে তাহা শুনিয়া শ্রোতৃবর্গের লোমাঞ্চ হইত। ফলতঃ সুকবির রচনা ও সু-কাটান্‌দার কর্ত্তৃক যোজনা হইলে নানা রস উদ্দীপনার সম্পূর্ণ সম্ভাবনা। ছড়া কাটানো হইলে সকলে মিলিয়া আবার গান।...

শ্যামাবিষয় প্রায় এক ছড়াতেই সমাপ্ত হইত, কিন্তু অনেক দলে দুই তিনটি ছড়া, সুতরাং তিন চারিটি গানও হইত। সে যাহা হউক, ঐ দল শ্যামাবিষয় গাইয়া আপনাদের যন্ত্রাদি সহিত উঠিয়া যাইতেন, প্রতিদ্বন্দ্বী দল আসরে নামিতেন। তাঁহারাও ঐরূপ শ্যামা বিষয় শেষ করিয়া উঠিয়া গেলে পুনর্ব্বার পূর্ব্বদল আসিয়া সাজ বাজাইয়া সখীসম্বাদের মহড়া গারূটি গাইয়া ছড়া কাটাইতেন। প্রথম ছড়ার পর গান আবার দ্বিতীয় ছড়া ও তৃতীয় গান: আবার তৃতীয় ছড়া ও চতুর্থ গান এইরূপে কয়েকটি ছড়া ও কয়েকটি গানের পর তাঁহাদের প্রস্থান ও অপর দলের প্রবেশ এবং ঐরূপে ছড়া গান হইয়া সখীসম্বাদ মিটিয়া যাইত। পরে বিরহের বেলাও ঐ প্রণালী অবলম্বিত হইত।

একটি কথা বলিতে অবশিষ্ট। যখন যে দল যে প্রসঙ্গের বিন্যাস হেতু আসরে নামিতেন, তখন তাঁহারা যে কয়টা ছড়া ও গান করিতেন, তাহার সমুদয়েতেই সেই একই বিষয়ের আনুপূর্ব্বিক বর্ণনা থাকিত—বিভিন্ন ছড়ায় যে বিভিন্ন বিষয়, তাহা নয়। অর্থাৎ একদল সখীসম্বাদের সময় প্রথম ছড়ায় মাধুর, দ্বিতীয় ছড়ায় মান, তৃতীয় ছড়ায় দান গাইতেন, তাহা হইবার যো নাই—সব ছড়াতে সেই একই প্রসঙ্গ বিবৃত করিতেন।

Such is the *pāñchāli* of the modern type. It is not known in what form it existed in earlier periods but the kind described began to be popular from the beginning of

the 19th century. Dāśarathi Rāy was undoubtedly the greatest, if not the earliest, writer of the group, but it is not beyond doubt whether it was he who first modified its earlier form and set in the new fashion. Before Dāśarathi we get the name of Gaṅgārām Naskar who is sometimes regarded as the founder of this new type; and Guro Dumbo, who is taken by some to be a *pāṅchāli*-writer and not a Kabiwala, certainly flourished prior to Dāśarathi. But of these earlier mysterious figures, nothing practically is known and no specimen of their production has come down to us. After Dāśu Rāy, came Sannyasī Chakrabartī, Nabīn Chakrabartī, Rasik Rāy, Ṭhākur Dās Datta, Gobardhan Dās, Kesab Chāṅd, Nanilāl, Jadu Ghoṣ and a host of others who were more or less followers and imitators of Daśarathi Rāy, their acknowledged head in the line. The latter, therefore, may not be unfittingly described as the great exponent and populariser, if not the originator, of *pāṅchāli* in its modern form.

Chronology of the *Pāṅchāli*-writers.

Thus, although widely prevalent in the beginning of the 19th century, we get no surviving specimen of *pāṅchāli* belonging to the period between 1800 and 1825, with which this volume is directly concerned; for, Dāśu Rāy himself was born in 1804 or 1805 and his imitators and followers belong to a period considerably later. Indeed, the most flourishing time of the modern *pāṅchāli* was between 1825 and 1860, and therefore, strictly speaking, it falls outside our period. It was a form of entertainment which began to be popular after the reputation of the Kabiwalas had been already on the decline; *pāṅchāli*-literature should, therefore, be more

The most flourishing period of *pāṅchāli* falls outside our present scope.

fittingly taken up in its proper place in the treatment of the next period.

The same remarks with regard to chronology apply also to *yātrā*, a species of popular amusement which was closely allied to *kabi* and *pāṁchāli* and prevalent from a very early period but of which specimens have come down from comparatively recent times. The traditional existence of *yātrās* is known to us from time immemorial and in Bharat's *Nāṭyaśāstra*, we hear of popular semi-dramatic performances which have been generally regarded as the probable precursor of the popular *yātrās*, on the one hand, and of the later Sanscrit dramatic literature on the other. In Bhababhūti's *Mālatī-mādhava*,[1] the word *yātrā* is used probably in the technical sense as well as in the general sense of a festivity. It cannot be determined now whether the *yātrās* lineally descended without deviation from these earlier popular festive entertainments of the operatic type, obtaining from the earliest times, or whether the later Sanscrit dramatic literature, especially represented in such irregular types as the *Mahānāṭaka* or in the particular operatic types noted in all works on Sanscrit dramaturgy, reacted upon it and greatly modified its form and spirit. But it may be noted that the principal elements in the old *yātrā* seem to be of indigenous growth, peculiar to itself. In the first place, the *yātrā* generally possessed a religious or mythological theme, pointing to a probable connexion with religious festivities and ceremonies. In the next place, although there always existed a dramatic

The *yātrā*.

Its antiquity.

The principal elements in the *yātrā*, peculiar to itself.

[1] *Mālatī-mādhava* (Bomb. Sans. Series Ed.), p. 8.

element, the song-element absolutely preponderated and the choral peculiarities threw into shade its mimetic qualities. And lastly, there were anomalous and grotesque elements in it which at once indicated a partial absence of the dramatic sense and materially retarded its growth. All these naturally stood in the way of taking the *yātrā* out of its operatic structure and evolving the proper dramatic form and spirit ; but these at the same time helped to create by themselves a special nondescript species which cannot be confidently traced back to any known or recognised type of earlier times.

But the *yātrā*, in however crude and undeveloped form, contained within itself the germs of a regular drama. Although the principal theme was drawn from religion or mythology, the realities of scenery and character were not absolutely ignored. It is true that there was hardly any action, and therefore there was little analysis or development of character. Even there was no scenic apparatus and all the details were left to the imagination of the audience. But all this was made up for by the gift of communicating life to the persons, the story, and the dialogues as well as by the rich operatic qualities of the performance. With the modern stage-actor or dramatist, the Yātrāwala never enters into comparison ; he is working on a different scene, addressing a different audience and using different tools, colours and methods. Nevertheless within his limits, he could make his theme interesting and his characters lively by a natural gift of vivid representation. The makeshifts which he used were crude and, taken in detail, his methods were faulty, but he succeeded with all his rude resources in making the whole picture impressive and entertaining to his audience. It is, therefore, quite natural to find the

Undeveloped and crude dramatic elements.

Yātrāwala making a skilful use of the common yet useful device of mingling the ludicrous and the pathetic in order to add a lively zest to the story. The serious and the comic set off each other and relieve the melodramatic strain of the whole performance. Again, every representation was concerned primarily with the gradual unfolding of a single plot ; it never consisted of a disjointed "padding" of unconnected scenes and characters. Through the necessarily slow and elaborate transition of the whole performance, the story is made to stand out clear and alive. In the midst of all its surroundings and accessories, this was always kept in view in every regular *yātrā*. Speaking of the once famous *yātrā* of Paramā Adhikārī, a writer in the old series of *Bāṅgadarśan* lays stress upon the fact that Paramā's *yātrā* could never be realised in isolated scenes or songs, inimitably done though they were, but the whole performance had to be witnessed from the beginning to the end. In later periods, mundane subjects and secular themes found their way into the religious *yātrā* and its monotony and seriousness were relieved by the introduction of lively, though conventional, interludes of a farcical nature conducted by characters like Nārada or Madhu Maṅgal. All these indicated the enormous possibilities of the *yātrā* for gradually approximating towards the regular drama.

In course of time, the drama proper might have, in this way, slowly evolved itself from the indigenous *yatrā*, just in the same way as the English drama of the Renaissance evolved itself from the mediæval mysteries and miracle-plays. There were, we have seen, inherent opportunities for such a course of development. The mimetic qualities of a *yātrā*, its realistic tendencies, its weaving out of a consistent plot, its

Why the amorphous *yātrā* did not develop into the regular drama.

taste for a personal and lively dramatic story, its mingling of the comic and the serious—all these traits more or less indicated that the amorphous *yātrā* might have passed into an indigenous form of the regular drama. But as a matter of fact it never had done so in its whole course. Indeed in ancient Bengali literature, inspite of these and other advantages and of the presence of a pattern literature in Sanscrit, we have practically nothing by way of dramatic composition; and the beginnings of the stage and the drama in the 19th century Bengal, on the other hand, had little connexion with the popular *yātrā*. We shall trace this point in detail in its proper place; but we may note here that notwithstanding these opportunities, other conditions were not favourable and there were serious obstacles, both external and internal, which stood effectively in the way of such a development.

Although dissimilar in many respects, the early *yātrā* shows in character and substance some resemblance to the medieval mystery and miracle-play and both had their origin in the popular representation of religious themes. But the conditions of growth and expansion differed considerably in the two cases.

Contrast with the European medieval mystery and miracle-play.

The intellectual readjustment which followed upon the Renaissance in Europe, tended to the gradual secularisation of literature and the creation of a vigorous mundane vitality which could supply the basis of the new theatre. Free belief replaced imposed orthodoxy, moral fervour replaced determined religious practices, energetic action and emotion replaced external and mechanical discipline. With the disappearance of the bondage of medievalism, which had forbidden a life of nature and worldly hopes, and with the appearance of the morally

Influence of the Renaissance in developing European drama;

and intellectually emancipated man of the Renaissance, life grew into a real thing. Vast and vital changes became manifest in the internal as well as the external world, in society, in politics, in religion, in the thoughts and aspirations of mankind. The drama was the natural outcome of this rich and manifold life, of this practical and positive movement which had placed literature on a purely human basis.

Bengal, on the other hand, never witnessed such a great movement, bringing in its train intellectual, moral and civic emancipation. There was no such universal awakening or enthusiasm. The external world had never possessed any inherent interest to the naturally stoical and idealistic Hindu and nothing happened which would take away this inbred apathy. His deep-rooted pessimism with regard to this world and unlimited optimism with regard to the next had produced a stoical resignation, an epicurean indifference and a mystic hope and faith which paralysed personal action, suppressed the growth of external life, and replaced originality by submission. In literature, therefore, which was overwhelmed by the crushing idea of a brooding fate (*adriṣṭabād*) or of a divinity shaping our ends (*devalīlā*), religion was the only theme which flourished itself and song or recitative poem was the only vehicle which conveyed this religious preoccupation. The prevalence of the rigoristic (*sannyās*) ideal and the natural prominence gives to *sāttvik* over the *rājasik* qualities fostered an indifference to mundane activities and an absorption in supermundane affairs which materially hampered free expansion of art, science and literature of the nation. A majestic common sense, a rich feeling

but no such influence in ancient Bengal.

Influences which moulded national life and natural character in Bengal, not favourable to the development of the *yātrā* into the drama.

for the concrete facts and forces of human nature and human life, a sense of enjoyment of the good things of earth, a passion of energy and action are traits which foster material civilisation and arts but which are antagonistic to Hindu ideas of placid contentment, to the insensibility, amazement and ecstasy of religious devotion, to the wistfulness and pathos of spiritual desire. Even in Sanscrit, complete secularisation of literature and development of poetry and drama could be possible in the more practical, positive and materially civilised age of a Vikramāditya or a Harṣavardhan. A national drama is not only the product of national glory but it is also a sure index to the sensitive and energetic strength of the external life of the nation itself.

The preponderance of the operatic and melodramatic elements in the *yātrā*, and its religious theme

But there were drawbacks inherent in the *yātrā* itself which stood in the way of its developing into a drama proper and the foremost of these drawbacks was the fact that in the *yātrā*, the operatic and the melodramatic elements always preponderated over the dramatic. There was little dialogue, still less action, but there was always an exclusive predominance of songs in which even the dialogues were carried on and the whole action worked out. This over-flow of the song-element, no doubt, redeemed much of the incongruities and anomalies of the *yātrā* but it also told seriously on the development of its dramatic elements by tending to destroy, in a flood of music and musical episodes, all considerations of dramatic probability and propriety. The peculiar mode of singing *champaṭīs* or the *mahājan padas* by '*pattan*' or devising the peculiar variation of a *tukko* in the music of the *kirtan* was utilised by every Yātrākar for entrancing his audience. An expert and skilful Yātrāwala, however, did not always choose to walk

in this beaten way and we learn that in the *yātrā* of Paramā, already alluded to, there was less music and more dialogue—a device which was meant to infuse a dramatic interest in the story; yet it is well-known that the chief attraction of the *yātrā* consisted in its songs and that there was nothing more delightful than Paramā's famous *tukko* whose musical quality no other yātrāwala is said to have ever surpassed. A very considerable portion of ancient Bengali literature consisted of songs and of poems which could be recited or chanted and the *yātrā* in its peculiar lyric quality, strictly conformed to this widely prevalent lyric propensity. The influences which moulded national life and national characteristics helped rather than checked this universal tendency and there was absolutely nothing which could lift the *yātrā* out of its religious envelopment or its musical structure.

The *yātrā*, again, began to be extremely popular from a literary period which powerfully contributed to its lyric and religious tendencies. The earliest reference to the *yātrā* probably dates from the Baiṣṇab era. But Baiṣṇabism, if it humanised literature to a certain extent, hardly ever secularised it. It only intensified the religious ardour of the people and brought with it a mass of lyric and mystic literature which was not only alien in its essence to the drama but which also encouraged the musical, melodramatic and religious predilections of the *yātrā*. The Baiṣṇab poets, no doubt, brought new ideas and novel modes of art but it is hardly correct to designate the Baiṣṇab era as the Renaissance period of Bengal.[1] It would be out of place

emphasised and encouraged by the Baiṣṇab literature, lyric and mystic in quality.

[1] Sāradācharaṇ Mitra, in *Sāhitya*, 1315 B. S.

to discuss this point here in detail; but it may be pointed out that at least in the literary sphere, Baiṣṇabism was not a universal movement and its influence on contemporary and subsequent literature was never wide. In estimating this influence on the literature of the 17th and 18th centuries we must guard against the error of regarding it in the magnifying perspective in which we view it in the 19th or the 20th century, in which this influence has been very marked. Baiṣṇabism never disturbed seriously the uninterrupted course of Bengali literature from the earliest time down to the 18th century. Side by side with Baiṣṇab songs and lyrics flourished the traditional *chaṇḍī-poems*, *manasār gān*, *dharma-maṅgal*, *śibāyan*, which in form and spirit bear little kinship with Baiṣṇab productions and which affiliates itself with the earlier and later poetical literature of Bengal. Even a century later, we find the same tradition carried on in the *Padmābatī* of Ālāol, *Durgāpañcharātri* of Jagat Rām, *Śibāyan* of Rāmeśvar, *Anandā maṅgal* of Bhārat-chandra, *Gaṅgābhakti-taraṅgiṇī* of Durgā Prasād—all of which show little direct influence of Baiṣṇab ideas or Baiṣṇab forms of art. The socio-ethical ideas of Baiṣṇabism, no doubt, inaugurated a new line of culture; but its cosmopolitanism, its ideal of universal love and its theory of emotional realisation was antagonistic to the development of nationality or of national ideas. A spark of new life animated the social organism but this new-born religious enthusiasm hardly permitted its votaries to stand and cast a look around them; it carried them off their feet in a flood of devotional ecstasy, in a flood of lyric idealism. Instead of a full-blooded dramatic literature, it gave us a mass of resplendent religious-amatory lyrics.

The influence of Baiṣṇabism, therefore, was hardly favourable to the development of the inherent dramatic elements

in the *yātrā* ; on the other hand, it cherished its musical peculiarities, developed its melodramatic tendency, and emphasised its religious predilections. Indeed, we find the Baiṣṇabs utilising the popular *yātrā* as a means of representing *kṛṣṇa-līlā* and diffusing its novel ideas. The earliest *yātrā* of which we have any mention relate to such themes and was known technically and universally as the *Kṛṣṇa-yātrā*. In early Bengali literature prior to Chaitanya, no doubt, there prevailed songs relating to Śaiba and Śākta cults and it is probable that with these prevailed also *Śiba-yātrā* and *Chaṇḍī-yātrā*, traces of which we find even in 18th century, and probably also *Rām-yātrā* which had, however, no kinship with the spectacular Rām-līlā prevalent in the upper provinces. It is extremely difficult, in the absence of data, to speak confidently on the subject : but it seems that in course of time with the advent of Baiṣṇab ideas, *Kṛṣṇa-yātrā* overshadowed all other kinds and became absolutely supreme. The generic name of this *yātrā* was *Kālīya-daman yātrā* which, however, in spite of its name, related not only to this particular feat of Kṛṣṇa but included also *dān*, *mān*, *māthur* and other well-known *līlās*. These *yātrās* were preceded, as the *Kīrtan* of the Baiṣṇabs were (*taduchita gaurachandra*), by the recitation or singing of a *goura-chandrī*—a term which unmistakably connects it with Gaurachandra or Chaitanya. In *Chaitanya-maṅgal* and *Chaitanya-bhāgabat* [1] mention is made of a *yātrā*-festivity organised by Chaitanya himself in the house of Chandraśekhar Āchāryya. The history of

The *yātrā* in the Baiṣṇab era ; influence of Baiṣṇab ideas.

[1] *Chaitanya-bhāgabat*, ed. Atulkṛṣṇa Gosvāmī, pp.283-291. The expression used is আজি করিবাঙ নৃত্য অঙ্কের বিধানে, from which as well as from the account given, it is not clear whether it was a *yātrā* which was performed on this occasion or whether it was a regular sanscrit drama (such as the Baiṣṇab plays like *Jagannātha-ballabha*, *Dānakeli-kaumudī* or *Vidagdha-mādhava* in Bengali version) which was enacted on this occasion.

Bengali *yātrā*, therefore, is closely connected with that of Baiṣṇab literature in general and it would not be incorrect to say that Baiṣṇabism supplied the *yātrā* with themes for several centuries and confirmed, if it did not directly give it, its operatic and melodramatic qualities.

These qualities persisted practically throughout its whole history. But in course of time we find the *yātrā*, inspite of the drawback already noted, gradually developing its crude dramatic elements. After the Baiṣṇab era, the earliest well-known Yātrāwala was Paramānanda Adhikārī, a native of Bīrbhūm, who flourished probably in the 18th century and carried on the tradition of *Kāliya-daman yātrā*. There was a greater amount of acting and dialogues in this *yātrā*, although song, melodrama and Baiṣṇab themes were not altogether discarded. The tradition was continued by Sudāma Adhikārī and Lochan Adhikārī, the latter specially excelling in the delineation of *Akrūra Saṁbād* and *Nimāi Sannyās*—themes which possessed greater human interest than the conventional *dān*, *mān*, *māthur* of Śrīkṛṣṇa. Gobinda Adhikārī of Kṛṣṇanagar, Pitāmbar Adhikārī of Kātwā and Kālāchānd Pāl of Bikrampur, Dacca, were comparatively recent exponents of the same *Kṛṣṇa-yātrā*. But the other species—*Rām Yātrā*, *Chaṇḍī Yātrā*, *Mansār Bhāsān Yātrā*—were not totally extinct. Guruprasād Ballabh of Farāsdāṅgā and Lausen Bādal of Burdwan gained considerable reputation in *Chaṇḍī Yātrā* and *Mansār Bhāsān Yātrā*, respectively; while *Rām Yātrā*, obtained celebrity in the hands of Premchānd Adhikārī, Ānanda Adhikārī and Jayachandra Adhikārī, of Pāṭāihāṭā. No specimen, except a few scattered songs, has been preserved of these earlier Yātrāwalas.

New elements in the *yātrā* finding its way into it in later periods.

Such is the history of the *yātrā* up to the beginning of the 19th century. After these professional *yātrās*, come varieties of modern *yātrās*, chiefly amateur parties (*sakher dal*), in which, inspite of their profusion of instrumental and vocal music, dramatic ideas and methods were slowly evolving themselves. Beltalā Eṇḍedār Yātrā or the Yātrā of Gopāl Uḍe may be cited as instances. In imitation of prologues in Sanscrit drama, we have, in these, farcical introduction as well as interlude in which laughable, though often vulgar, characters like Kāluā Bhuluā, methar and methrāṇī began to figure. Again, we have here for the general theme not *Kṛṣṇa-līlā* as in *Kāliya-damana yātrā* or even *Chaṇḍī-līlā*, *Rām-līlā* or *Mansār Kathā* but essentially secular themes of mythology or fiction such as Nala-damayantī or Bidyā-sundar began to be prominent; and later on with the degeneration of the *yātrā* in tone, temper and style, Bidyā-sundar alone became the prevalent theme.

The *yātrā* in the beginning of the 19th century.

The existing specimens of the *yātrās* all belong to this late period in its history. Although the *yātrā* had been extensively popular from the earliest times or even from the Baiṣṇab era down to the middle of the 19th century, the earlier specimens have not been preserved. We know nothing of these earlier Yātrāwalas and their productions, excepting some general accounts which we incidentally get here and there. Even all the best known Yātrāwalas of the 19th century, whose productions have, in a more or less complete form, come down to us, belong to a comparatively recent time, to the period between 1825 and 1850. The Yātrāwalas, flourishing between 1800 and 1825, some of whom have been already mentioned, are however known

No earlier specimens preserved.

only by name and reputation and even all the names are not known. This form of literature, like the production of the Kabiwalas, was extemporised and was meant to contribute to the transient pleasure of its audience ; and much of it was of the ephemeral type. The remarks already made on this aspect of the Kabi-song apply with equal force to the case of the *yātrā* and, like the Kabi-songs, it degenerated considerably in style and temper. No attempt was ever made to preserve them in print and much of this literature is now lost. Of the few well-known Yātrāwalas, however, whose work has been more or less embodied in print, Kṛṣṇa Kamal Bhaṭṭāchārya was born about 1810, Gopāl Uḍe about 1819 and Gobinda Adhikārī, whose dates are not exactly known, was probably a contemporary of both these. All these writers, therefore, fall outside the scope of this volume. It was about this time or a little later that the *yātrā* had already begun to degenerate. This degeneration was almost synchronous with and was therefore hastened by the change of taste and literary fashion of the 19th century which came to regard all these old forms of literature as out of date and contemptible. With the spread of these new ideas and new literary methods, a regular stage was gradually established and dramas, written in imitation of European models, tolled the death-knell of the old *yātrā* which still lingered but never found the same place in popular favour. It is not surprising therefore that in the preface to his *Ratnābalī*, one of the earliest Bengali dramas written for this new stage, Rāmnārāyaṇ Tarkaratna, himself an orthodox pundit, speaks in contemptuous terms of the

The printed specimens which have come down belong to a period between 1825 and 1850.

Degeneration of the *yātrā*, synchronous with and hastened by the change of literary taste in the 19th century.

popular *yātrā* and votes in favour of the new drama based on Sanscrit and English models. The history of these latter-day Yātrāwalas, of this phase in the development of the *yātrā* and of its connexion with the new drama will, therefore, be traced in its proper place in the next volume.

APPENDIX I

[*See p. 45 foot-note ; p. 119, foot-note 3*]

Old Bengali Prose

Though prose is more obviously natural to man in conversation, it is only after considerable experience that he realises its utility as a medium of formal writing.

Late growth of prose.

Bengali Literature is no exception to this rather commonplace "verse-first-prose-afterwards" adage of literary history. Our forefathers from the very earliest times, no doubt, spoke in prose but it is possible to use prose without knowing or thinking about it, and the late development of prose-writing in Bengali follows generally the order of development in almost all languages. Indeed the achievement of early Bengali prose is not only very late but, speaking generally, it amounts to almost nothing : such achievement as there is, for several centuries, is in verse. Poetry attained a considerable degree of maturity while we have nothing but a mere lisping of prose. This preponderance of one form of writing partially explains and is explained by the extreme poverty of the other : but it is more than a case of preponderance, it is one of monopoly. It may almost be said that there is not a single piece of spirited prose of the profane kind in Bengali from the earliest times to the early beginnings of the 19th century : whatever exists of other kinds is again late, scanty, and for the most part, frankly unsatisfactory.

Predominance of verse

Not only the bulk of early prose literature is late and scanty but it is not yet quite reasonably clear that what

has come down exemplifies very fairly the whole upon which we may fully form an estimate. Much of early Bengali prose, like its verse, is lost: much again yet remains to be unearthed. The only specimen of very early prose which probably goes beyond the 16th century is to be found in the few doubtful passages interspersed in the verses *Śūnya Purāṇ* and perhaps in the apocryphal work attributed to Chaṇḍīdās: other prose specimens, mostly cryptic and mystical writings of the Sahajiyā sect, together with a little good prose-writing of other kinds, may all be taken to be productions of late 18th century, none of them certainly going beyond the 17th. Any attempt to estimate the development attained by old Bengali prose, as shown by these scanty remains, must of necessity be somewhat superficial and incomplete, not only in view of the fragmentary nature of much of these writings but also because of the difficulties of chronology. Most of these manuscripts are undated and show considerable differences of readings. Nature of the script and general style of composition are at best unsafe guides, not only in themselves, but also because the one is not yet a matter of systematic study while the characteristic specimens of the other in different periods are not yet available. Even when the manuscripts are dated, the exact relation of the manuscript to the date of composition it is almost impossible to determine. These difficulties are multiplied again by the presence of divergent readings in different manuscripts of the same work. It is needless to say that unless we can stand upon firm and sure ground in matters of chronology, not to speak of insufficiency of materials to go upon, we can hardly expect to form a correct and critical estimate of our subject of study and all our attempts in this direction are at best nothing more than tentative.

Difficulties in the way of our study.

The earliest specimen of Bengali prose is supposed to be the short passages in Rāmāi (or Ramāi) Paṇḍit's *Śūnya Purāṇ*, the manuscript of which is placed by its editor (Sāhitya Pariṣat edition) in the 17th century, although the so-called prose passages, if not the verse, reveal a much earlier and more antique form of diction. If the language of the recently published *Śrī Kṛṣṇa Kīrtana* belongs to the early part of the 14th century,[1] we can safely assume that the prose of *Śūnya Purāṇ* must have had its origin in a somewhat earlier age ; and the supposition is not unlikely that the passages, as we have them, may contain traces of the original writings of Rāmāi Paṇḍit, going back to at least 13th century A.D.,[2] varied and modified, it may be, by later scribal and other interferences. It would be interesting to examine these ancient specimens critically but such examination is beset with difficulties not only on account of the frankly unintelligible vocabulary and crabbed syntax, considerable corruption of the text rightly commented upon by many a critic, but also because of the exclusive and esoteric doctrines they embody, which seem to create a language of their own whose meaning is all but lost to us. Here is a portion of the celebrated passage on বারমাসি.

Earliest extant prose specimen *Śūnya Purāṇ*.

Passage on Bāramāsi.

কোন মাসে কোন রাসি। চৈত্র মাসে মীনরাসি। হে কালিন্দি-জল বার ভাই বার আদিত্ত। হথ পাতি লহ সেবকর অর্ঘ পুষ্পপানি। সেবক হব সুখি আমনি ধীমাং কন্নি। গুরু পণ্ডিত দেউলা দানপতি। সাংসুর ভোক্তা আমনি সন্ন্যাসী গতি জাইতি গ,এন ব,এন তুআরি তুয়ার পাল ভাণ্ডারী ভাণ্ডারীপাল রাজদূত কোমি কোটাল পরে সুখ মুকতি এহি দেউলে পড়িব জঅ জঅকার। দাতার দানপতির বিঘ্ন জার নাস।

[1] Preface to *Kṛṣṇakīrtanya*, H. P. Shastri in *Calcutta Review*, pp. 392-93.

[2] H. P. Shastri, *op. cit.*, p. 394.

কোন মাসে কোন রাসি। বৈশাখ মাস মেস রাসি। হে বসুদেব বার ভাই বার আদিত্ত হাথ পাতি লেহ সেবকর পুষ্পপানি। সেবক হব সুখি আমনি ধামাৎ কন্নি। গুরু পণ্ডিত দেউলা দানপতি সাংসুর ভোক্তা আমনি সন্ন্যাসী (? সন্নাসী) গতি জাইতি গাএন বাএন দুআরি দুআরপাল ভাণ্ডারী ভাণ্ডারপাল রাজদূত কোমি কোটাল পাবেক সুখ মুকতি। এহি দেউলে পড়িব জঅ জআকার। দাতা দানপতির বিঘ্ন জাব নাস। কোন মাস কোন রাসি। বৈসাখ গেলে জৈট মাসে বৃস রাসি।

and so forth through all the months of the year in the same strain.

On first reading this fantastic piece of apparently unrhythmical writing would hardly seem to be prose at all: and it has been doubted if it is prose or verse or none, or a curious admixture of the two. But a careful study will make it clear that is not verse in any sense but probably prose, although it may be prose of a kind unfamiliar to us, and that it has a distinct rhythm of its own. When carefully examined, this and other passages, if the text is correct, will reveal that here for the first time there is a perception, however faint, of the existence of distinct styles of prose and verse, although the instruments of the two harmonies may not have been very clearly differentiated.[1] In order to understand the

Close relation of prose and verse in old Bengali literature

[1] All these speculations are based on the assumption that what the passages embody is really prose. They have been always taken as such, but my own suspicion is that they are really verse-lines, perhaps imperfectly recorded fragments, not properly examined or shifted with care when the text was edited and printed from the original Mss. Unfortunately I had no access to the original manuscript, in the possession of the editor, upon which the text is chiefly based, and had to depend entirely upon the Sāhitya Pariṣat edition which is anything but what scientific scholarship would desire. There is no attempt to render

nature of this passage, we must bear in mind that the connexion between old Bengali verse and old Bengali prose was extraordinarily close. There was a time, indeed, when writers of this literature hardly ever recognised the separate existence of prose as a vehicle of expression, classifying it, in theory, as a species of poetry itself and calling it গদ্যছন্দ or prose-metre and, in practice, making their prose, with alliteration, balanced accent, and other devices, look as much like their own verse as possible. It is a well-known fact that much of this prose, like the passage just quoted, interspersed in the midst of verse, was consciously adapted not only to read like verses but to be sung or chanted after the manner of *Kathakas* or rhapsodists. It is curious to note in this connexion that in many of these prose pieces we find the *bhaṇitā* or signature of their respective authors in the same way as we find them in their poetical compositions.

Anyone, studying the passage already quoted and those that follow even with moderate attention, will have no difficulty in agreeing to what has been said as to the close relation between early prose and verse. Not only the condensed mode and ordonnance of verse is followed here, but the symmetry of the lines, turns of phrases peculiar

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the passages intelligible in spite of the addition of a very imperfect glossary. The text is suspiciously corrupt and the editor himself acknowledges that he had no time to collate the three manuscripts with the published text but that he had got it done by his pundits. There is nowhere any indication of variations of readings given by the different manuscripts utilised, nor any attempt even to determine the correct reading. This is a most strange fact and renders the edition entirely valueless to a scientific student. The *Śūnya Purāṇ* as it stands now is an extremely difficult book to edit with all its indispensable critical apparatus and the Sāhitya Pariṣat must be praised for its boldness in undertaking to reprint it: but one would wish that the scholarship displayed in bringing out this edition had been equal to the boldness of this difficult undertaking.

to verse, the refrain-like repetition of sentences, the very frequent intrusion of half-staves or full verse-lines (like দাতার দানপতির বিঘ্ন জাব নাস or এহি দেউলে পড়িব জঅ জআকার) capable of accurate scansion, occasional occurrence of end-rhymes, and lastly, the muffled under-hum of verse-rhythm throughout—all indicate that the passage, in its close approach to the rhythm and tune of poetry, was meant, if it is prose at all, to be chanted with the verses to which it was only an appendage. Here is another passage, more intelligible and more varied, in which the characteristics already indicated are more prominent:

exemplified also by the passage under discussion.

হে জয়সঙ্খ হে বিজঅসঙ্খ তুহ্মি সংখ হইএ চিরাই। তুহ্মার জলে স্তান করেন শ্রীধর্ম্ম গোসাঞি। অভিসেক জলে স্তান মনখির কৈসের পাবন সইতের পাবন সচল অচল স্থষ্টি স্থজিলেন গোসাঞি ভকতবৎসল। স্থবন্নের কোদাল রূপার বাঁট। মহাদেব কুদালেন স্বর্গ মর্ত্ত পাতাল। জটার কূলে পেলেন নীর সে নীর লইয়া দসমত্ত গতি বাখানি। ব্রহ্মা হইলেন পণ্ডিত বিষ্টু হইলেন কন্নি মহাদেব মেলি করেন জলপাবন। মূলপাবন স্থলপাবন গোষ্ঠীপাবন ছায়াপাবন পণ্ডিতপাবন উত্তর দখিন পূব পচ্ছিম পাবন। জীত্তাপাবন। কায়াপাবন মুণ্ডপাবন ধড়পাবন। স্থবন্নর পুস্কর্ণি রূপার ঘাট এহি ফুল জলে স্তান করেন শ্রীদেব করতার। আদ্দপতি অনাদ্দপতি করিব সার। এহি স্থদ্ধ পাটে ধর্ম্মর আগুসার। অস্সথ বেল পলাস মোউলর পাত। সিনান করেন পরভু তিদসর নাথ। স্তান সন্ধ্যা (? সন্ধ্যা) গোসাঞির চাম্পান দিব ঘাট (?)। ধবল সিংহাসন গোসাঞর ধবল পাট। উরিলেন গোসাঞি ঝলমল করিএ কন্ধে নবগুন পৈতা।

It will be noticed that in this passage there are lines at the beginning and at the end, which form distinct couplets having regular end-rhymes. The opposite tendency of having rhythmic prose lines in the midst of verse will be

exemplified in the lines on অধিবাস to be found at p. 61 of the Sāhitya Parisat edition. The following again is a curious illustration of mixed prosaic-poetic style:

কেহ মাটি কাটে কেহ পাথর চাঁছে হাতী মাড়মর পটা কাটিআ ছিড়িয়া মাপিআ জখিআ সত হাতে হইল পোতা। রাতিত পাথর চারি পাতি কর কতে হল সুদ সুনার আড়া। কাঞ্চন বাঁধিয়া মেজে করিল কাট ভাল (? কাচ-ঢাল)। মণ্ডপে ফটিকের থাম লাগে চন্দন নাদন। আর নাত ডকে (?) লাগিল গজান। ইলা মণ্ডপে দপ্পন সভা করে। বেরাল পাটর গাটী সুনার কড়ি লাগে রূপার বাখারি ছিটিকে তথির উপরে বেরাল পাটর গাটী সভা করে গোড়ি বসে থরে থর। মউর পুচ্ছর ছাউনি ধর্ম্মর ঘর। বেরাল পাটর গাটি পিড়াঅ সভা করে। সুনার কলস তথি উড়এ নেতর ধুতি। সুনার কলস নেতর পতাকা দিল জে তুলিআ জুই মূর্ত্তি হএ কামিন্যা বিসন্তর আনাইল অন্তরীখে। শ্রীধর্ম্ম চরণগুনে শ্রীজুত রামাই ভনে হঅ কবি অনাত্তর (? অনাদর) দাস। অর্চ্চনা করিআ ভাব পূজ নিরঞ্জনে জদি হব ভবনদী পার।

What these passages illustrate.

These passages, it must be admitted, are not fine literary specimens by themselves but, to a student of literary history, their formal importance is very great. They illustrate, if not anything else, at least the fact that prose has not yet fully emerged itself and come into prominence, at that particular stage, as a distinct mode of writing although there is at the same time a faint indication of such understanding in the literary mind. This is not what we understand by prose-poetry or poetical prose but the instruments of the two harmonies are so nearly identical that the products slide and grade off into one another very easily and undistinguishably. This may be called the beginning of prose—a curious literary phenomenon of which not many instances

Differentiation of the styles of prose and verse.

may be found in the early prose of other languages and which leaves little doubt as to the value and relative antiquity of the specimens of question. We see here the very early stages in the processes by which prose is slowly evolving itself out of poetry and asserting its right to recognition as a medium of expression altogether distinct from verse. It is a matter of regret, however, that we cannot trace other stages in this process as we do not possess any documents of prose-writing of this or subsequent periods until we came to the 16th century.

Prose evolving out of poetry.

One of the curious effects of their intermixture of prosaic and poetic styles is the idea, however imperfect, or rhythmical arrangement in these prose passages. Of course, verse and prose rhythms have entirely different values and the harmony of the one is not always desirable in the other: yet, if it is not rash to dogmatise in the absence of any but slight and scrappy knowledge of the phonetics of early Bengali, we cannot mistake the fine effect of symphonic arrangement (partly due to the presence of versicles) which the lines, perhaps unconsciously, attain. Of actual syntax there may not be much: nor is there any attempt at balance of phrase or periodic sentence-framing, although there is certainly a knowledge of the value of short and long sentences: but the very fact that the passages were meant as appendages to verse and composed with the not unlikely object of being sung gives them a peculiar rhythmic effect, rudimentary yet not childish, which it is impossible to ignore.

Rhythmic effect.

The apocryphal prose piece, *Chaitya Rūpa Prāpti* passing under the great name of Chaṇḍīdās does not, from our point of view, require any special examination. The following passage :—

Chaitya Rūpa Prāpti, attributed to Chaṇḍīdās.

চৈতন্যরূপের রা চ অধরূপ লাড়ি। রা অক্ষরে রাগ লাড়ি। চ অক্ষরে চেতন লাড়ি। র এতে চ মিশিল রা এতে বসিল। ইবে এক অঙ্গা লাড়ি। রাগ রতি। লাড়ির নাম সুধা॥ সেই লাড়ি সাতাইশ প্রকার।

will sufficiently indicate the same admixture of prose and verse-forms—and indeed we have a reference in the *Padakalpataru* to গদ্যপদ্যময় রচনা of Chaṇḍīdās but the sentences are shorter and the vocables more modern. The manuscript is dated 1674 and it is probable that the language does not go much earlier than that date. The frigid drip of doctrinaire talk—for it professes to explain *tāntrik* theories in riddle-like language and brief aphoristic sentences, almost always dropping the verb and seldom running beyond three or four words at a time—does not seem to allow much scope for the prose either to run fluently or to evince any remarkable literary aptitudes.

Sahajiyā writings (17th and 18th century).

This bare dry fatiguing aphoristic manner is illustrated by a body of so-called philosophic writings relating to the Sahajiyā cult, which belong in all probability to the 17th and the 18th centuries. The first work that calls for mention in this group is the curious manuscript called *Dehakaḍacha*, attributed to Narottama Ṭhākur, the text of which was published in the *Sāhitya Pariṣat Patrikā* (1304, no. 1, pp. 39-46). The date of the oldest manuscript is 1603 Śaka (1681 A.D.) and this date as well as the similarity of style and manner would place the work in the age in which the last mentioned Chaṇḍīdās apocrypha was written. The text of this manuscript, however, seems to be almost identical (making due allowance to trifling scribal and other variations) with that of *Ātma-jigñāsā*, ascribed to Kṛṣṇalās, (Sāhitya Pariṣat manuscript

no. 1474).[1] The vexed question of authorship or the sources of the works in question, their origin in an earlier *Svarūpa-kalpataru*, does not concern us here in the least; nor have we anything to do with their literary associations with the doctrines, real or imaginary, of the Sahajiyā cult and its mystical sublimation; what concerns us most is that Narottama, if Narottama he was, or Kṛṣṇadās, if Kṛṣṇadās there was, wrote in a severely scholastic manner, bare, dry and aphoristic abounding in technicalities, which may be suited for doctrinal exposition but which hardly shows any attempt, conscious or unconscious, at producing either style or rhythm. Here is a characteristic specimen from the beginning of *Dehak ḍcha*, with the corresponding additions and variations in brackets from the text of *Ātma-jigñāsā*:[2]

শ্রীশ্রীরাধাকৃষ্ণায় নমঃ [শ্রীশ্রীরাধাকৃষ্ণ] : [অথো আপ্তজিগাসা।] তুমি কে। [আমি কে !] আজি জীব [জিব]। তুমি কোন জীব [কোন জিব]। আমি তটস্ত জিব॥ থাকেন [থাক] কোথা [কথা] ভাণ্ডে। ভাণ্ড কীরূপে [কিরুপে] হইল। তত্ত [তত্ত্ব] বস্তু [বস্তুতে] হৈতে [হৈল]। তত্ত বস্তু কি কি [কি কি তত্ত্ববস্তু]। পঞ্চ [পঞ্চভূ] আত্মা। একাদশেন্দ্র [একাদষ ইন্দ্রি]। ছয় রিপু ইচ্ছা [জ্ঞান] এই সকল য়েক [এক] যোগে [জোগে হৈল] ভাণ্ড হৈল। পঞ্চাত্মা কে [পঞ্চভূআত্মা কাথে বলি]। প্রিথিবী আপ তেজঃ বাউ আকাশ [আপু তেজ বাউ বর্জ্জ আকাশ এই পঞ্চ]॥ একাদশীন্দ্র কে কে [একাদস ইন্দ্রি(য়) না(ম) কি]। কর্ম্ম ইন্দ্র পাঁচ [কর্ম্ম পঞ্চ ইন্দ্রি]। জ্ঞানীন্দ্র পাঁচ [জ্ঞান পঞ্চ ইন্দ্রি]। আবরন এক [মন এই একাদস ইন্দ্রি]।

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[1] See *Sāhitya Pariṣat Patrikā*, 1306, no. 1, p. 49 and no. 4, p. 327; *ibid* 1305, p 197; *ibid*, 1304, no. 4, p. 302.

[2] The text of *Ātmajigñāsā* here follows that of the Sāhitya Pariṣat manuscript (no. 1474). Other manuscripts noticed in the *Patrikā* (referred to in footnote 1) give slightly different readings.

In the same strain is the following from the *Kārikā* supposed to be written by Rūpa Gosvāmī, which is noticed in the *Bāndhab*, 1289 B.S. (p. 369) :[1]

শ্রীশ্রীরাধাবিনোদ জয়। অথ বস্তুনির্ণয়। প্রথম শ্রীকৃষ্ণের গুণনির্ণয়। শব্দগুণ গন্ধগুণ রূপগুণ রসগুণ স্পর্শগুণ এই পাঁচগুণ। এই পঞ্চগুণ শ্রীমতী রাধিকাতেও বসে। শব্দগুণ কর্ণে গন্ধগুণ নাসাতে রূপগুণ নেত্রে রসগুণ অধরে ও স্পর্শগুণ অঙ্গে। এই পঞ্চগুণে পূর্ব্বরাগের উদয়। পূর্ব্বরাগের মূল দুই। হঠাৎ শ্রবণ ও অকস্মাৎ দর্শন।

Other works.

There are several other works, *Āśraya-Nirṇaya*,[2] *Ātma-Nirūpaṇa*,[3] *Svarūpa-barṇana*,[4] *Rāga-mayī-kaṇā*,[5] much later productions but all attributed, after the ancient manner of lumping all

[1] The text as given here, apparently modernised in spelling, follows that given in *Bāndhab* and quoted also by Dinesh Chandra Sen in his *Bṛiha Bhāṣā O Sāhitya*, 2nd Ed., p. 628. The text as quoted above occurs also in a manuscript called রাগ-মালা by Narottama Dās, as follows: অথ উদ্দীপন কৃষ্ণগুণ নির্ণয়। রাধাকৃষ্ণ গুণনিরূপণ। শব্দ গন্ধ রূপ রস ও স্পর্শ এবং পঞ্চবিধ এবং রাধিকায়াঃ পঞ্চবিধা কর্ণে শব্দগুণ ১। নেত্রে রূপগুণ ২। নাসাতে গন্ধগুণ ৩। অধরে রসগুণ ৪। অঙ্গে স্পর্শগুণ ৫। etc.

See *Patrikā*, 1306, no. 3, p. 251 : also p. 67.

[2] There are two manuscripts of this work in the Sāhitya Pariṣat (nos. 331 and 1471). The following quotation is taken from earlier manuscript no. 1471 (dated 1247 B.S.). See also notice of this work in *Patrikā*, 1304, no. 4, p. 303, in which mention is also made of another manuscript dated 1098 B.S. See also *Patrikā* 1308, p. 53, where this work is attributed to Narottama.

[3] Sāhitya Pariṣat manuscript no. 332 (dated 1247 B.S.). See also *Patrikā*, 1304, no. 4, p. 802 (where the date of the manuscript noticed is 1218 B.S.) and *ibid*, 1306, no. 1, p. 49.

[4] *Patrikā*, 1305, no. 1, p. 80 ; *ibid*, 1304, no. 6, pp. 343-4 (manuscript dated 1081 B.S.) ; *ibid* 1306, no. 1, p. 79 (manuscripts dated 1164 and 1246 B.S.).

[5] *Patrikā*, 1304, no. 4, pp. 333-34 ; *ibid*, 1306, p. 66. See *Patrikā* 1308, pp. 40-41 where passages are quoted from other prose works *viz.*, *Saraṇikā* and *Sādhanāśraya*.

anonyma upon a single apocryphal figure of traditional repute, to Kṛṣṇadās, which exhibit the same characteristic disjointed style, peculiar to this kind of 17th and 18th century writings. It is needless to multiply quotations but one or two short specimens would not be quite out of place.

Specimens.

অথ ব্রজে পঞ্চভাব ॥ সান্ত ১ দাস্য ২ সখ্য ৩ বাৎস্থল্য ৪ মধুর ৫ এই পঞ্চভাব। সান্তের পাত্র কে। সনকাদি মুনিগণ। গুণ কি নিষ্ঠাগুন। দাস্তের পাত্র ঐস্বর্য্যে হনুমান ঠাকুর। মাধুয্যে ব্রজে সর্ব্বে এবং গোপীগন। গুণ কি সেবা। সখ্যের পাত্র কে। ঐসর্য্যে অর্জ্জুন ঠাকুর। মাধুর্য্যে শ্রীদাম সুদামাদি। গুন কি সমতাগুন। বাচ্ছল্যের পাত্র কে॥ ঐসর্য্যে বসুদেব দৈবকি ॥ মাধুর্য্যে নন্দ জসোদা। গুন কি মমতাগুন। মধুর ভাবের পাত্র শ্রীরাধিকা এবং ব্রজাঙ্গনা সকল॥ গুন কি শিঙ্গার। ধাম চারি প্রকার। শ্রীবৃন্দাবন ১ গোলক ২ মথুরা ৩ দ্বারকা ৪। শ্রীবৃন্দাবনের পাত্র শ্রীনন্দনন্দন। গোলকে স্বয়ং ভগবান। মথুরায় বাসুদেব। দ্বারকায় নারায়ন ॥ ভাব দুই প্রকার। ভাব মহাঁভাব। ভাবের পাত্র গোপীগন ॥ মহাঁভাবের পাত্র শ্রীমতি রাধীকা। ভাব পরকিয়া। কোন পরকিয়া। উর্জ্জল পরকীয়া। কোন উর্জ্জল। রসোর্জ্জল। কোন রস প্রেমরস। কোন প্রেম। বিলাষ প্রেম। কোন বিলাস। মধুর বিলাস। কোন মধুর। জুগল মধুর। কোন জুগল। রাধাকৃষ্ণ। (আশ্রয় নির্ণয় বা ভজন নির্ণয়)

পরম বস্তু হয় জেই কোথা তার স্থিতি। কোথা হইতে আসিয়া করে শতদল পদ্মে স্থিতি। শতদল পদ্মে দেখ সেহ বেহার করে। বেহার সাঙ্গ হৈলে পুনু সেই স্থানে চলে॥ ব্রহ্ম অক্ষয় বিজ বয়েস নিত্তী কৈসর। নাইকা হইতে স্থিতি॥ নাএকের সঙ্গ হইলে প্রেমরস জন্মিলে। তাহাতে পরম বস্তুর উৎপতি। তার এক বিন্দু নিকসিলে কামভুবে। কামের দেস হয় কে। চেতন চিন্তিত অঙ্গিকৃত॥ নিতাই চৈতন্য অদ্বৈতে তিন দেসে তিন স্থিতি। মুখে চেতন চৈতন্য বক্ষে চিন্তিত নিত্যানন্দ॥

অঙ্গিকৃত অদ্বৈত অধেতে ॥ তিন দেসে তি নবতি। কামের স্থিতি মস্তকে। তাহাকে সর্ত্তা বলি ॥ প্রেমের স্থিতি চন্দ্রমণ্ডলে ॥ তাহাকে মহাসর্ত্তা বলি। সত্যা জিব আত্মা ॥ মহায়াত্মা পরময়াত্মা। জিব আত্মা নারায়ন ॥ পরম আত্মা ব্রজেন্দ্রনন্দন ॥ (আত্মনিরূপণ)

Characteristics of the style of these writings.

It would be hardly necessary to pass in review or cite passages from other Sahajiyā works like *Triguṇātmikā*,[1] *Brajapaṭala Kārikā*,[2] *Kriyāmañjarī-tatvanirūpaṇa*,[3] *Jigñāsāpatrī*,[4] all of which belong to the same age of prose-writing and exhibit similiar characteristics; nor is much advance noticeable in Rādhāballabh Dās's *Sahaja-tatva*, or *Rasabhakti-chandrikā* (also called *Āśrayanirṇaya*) of Chaitnya Dās quoted by Dinesh Chandra Sen in his *Baṅga Sāhitya Parichay*.[5] It is possible that this may have been the peculiar esoteric sectarian manner of the Sahajiyās but all these writings may also indicate a stage in Bengali prose composition (very unlike that indicated by the *Śūnya Purāṇ* pieces) in which an aphoristic form of theological exposition was widely prevalent, partly due to the exotic influence of Sanscrit Sūtra literature or Sūtra form of writing and partly perhaps an indigenous growth formed upon the manner of exposition followed in native *ṭol*s. One cannot but be struck by the evenness of method and manner—the sameness of production—of these Sahajiyā works: the one work may as well have been written by the author of the other—there being hardly any

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[1] *Patrikā*, 1304, p. 415.

[2] Sāhitya Pariṣat, MS. no. 355.

[3] Sāhitya Pariṣat, MS. no. 338.

[4] Sāhitya Pariṣat, MS. no. 937.

[5] Vol. II, pp. 1655-58 and pp. 1660-61. *Sahaja-tatva* is also noticed in *Patrikā*, 1306, pp. 76-77. *Rasabhakti-chandrikā* (also called *Bhajana-nirṇaya*) in *Patrikā*, 1306, p. 66.

distinguishing mark of style or even personal idiosyncrasy of the writer. When these passages are compared with those taken from the *Śūnya Purāṇ*, the great differences of the two manners will emerge at once. Except the passage on Bāramāsi already quoted, which sounds like a piece of mystic incantation, there is an attempt, however rude and unintelligible to us, on the part of the *Śūnya Purāṇ* writer to say whatever he has got to say in a connected manner: while in the passages under discussion the short disjointed statements, often in the form of questions and answers, with their rigid and stripped precision of language make the prose halting, clumsily hinged, and totally unsatisfactory from purely rhythmical-stylistic point of view. But then the object in the latter case was doctrinal exposition and not artistic or even plainly narrative presentment: there is no attempt at fine writing, no rhetorical tinge anywhere, nor any intrusion of sustained narrative or descriptive matter happily striking into style. This prose, with its conciseness or pointedness overdone, presents a striking contrast to the rudimentary yet elaborately rhythmed prose of *Śūnya Purāṇ*. No sane criticism will be enthusiastic over either the capacities or the performance of this plain passionless aphoristic prose, not pedantic but severely scholastic, devoid of all ornamentation or suggestiveness, and, in spite of its closeness to verse, hardly attaining any proper prose-rhythm at all.

Other prose writings (18th century).

Some improvement, however, in the direction of periodic and sustained prose will be found in some late works belonging probably to the 18th century and certainly not going beyond it. The language here is simple enough in syntax and vocabulary: there is no

argumentative or expository purpose in view, no prevalence of stock-subject or stock-technicalities. Of these works, *Bṛndābana-līlā* is really a remarkable composition from our point of view. It describes with all the enthusiasm of the faithful devotee the sacred groves and temples of Bṛndāban. We begin with the general topography of the holy place.[1]

Improvement in the direction of periodic and sustained prose style.

Bṛndābana-līlā.

শ্রীশ্রীবৃন্দালিলা কিঞ্চিত লিক্ষতে। আদৌ শ্রীশ্রীবৃন্দাবন তাঁহার মধ্যে শ্রীশ্রীগোবিন্দজীর মন্দির তাহার উত্তরে শ্রীশ্রীগোপিনাথজীর মন্দির তাহার পশ্চিমে কিছু দুর হয় মদন মোহনজীর মন্দির শ্রীশ্রীবৃন্দাবনের পশ্চিম দিগে কালিদহ সপ্তকেলি কদম্ব তাহার উত্তরে কালিদহর উত্তর কিনারে শূর্য্যঘাট তাহার উত্তরে জুগলঘাট তাহার পুর্ব্বে ধিরসমির তাহার পুর্ব্বে চিরঘাট বিনাম চ যেন ঘাট কেহ ২ গোবিন্দঘাট কহেন তাহার পুর্ব্বে কেশীঘাট তাহার পুর্ব্বে বংশীবট তাহার পূর্ব্বে পুলিনবন তাহার পূর্ব্বে বিরক্তমণ্ডল তাহার দক্ষিনে কিছু দুর হয় জমুনাজীর পশ্চিম ধারে ভোজনঠিলা যেখানে ব্রজ-পত্নির স্থানে অন্ন মাগিয়া খাইয়াছিলেন তাহার পশ্চিমে দাবানল তাহার পশ্চিমে পুনশ্চ কালিদহের দক্ষিন কিনারা শ্রীশ্রীবৃন্দাবনে শ্রীশ্রীগোবিন্দ গোপিনাথ মদনমোহন মদনগোপাল বঙ্কবেহারী অটলবেহারি চিরবেহারি বৎসবেহারি লালবেহারি রাশবেহারি কুঞ্জবেহারি বেহারিজি রাধাবল্লভ রাধাদামোদর রাধামাধব রাধাকান্ত রাধাকৃষ্ণ রাধামোহন রাধারমন জুগল-কিশোর কিশোরকিশোরি চকরচকোরি শ্যামাশ্যাম শ্যামসুন্দর কালিমর্দ্দন জসোদানন্দন কংসনিকন্দন কেশীঘাতন দেবকিনন্দন মুরলিমনোহর গোকুল-

Specimens.

[1] The text here follows Sāhityn Pariṣat MS. no. 928. MS. is incomplete and undated but it does not seem to be very old and its date is probably latter part of the 18th century. Dinesh Chandra Sen in his *Baṅga Bhāṣā O Sāhitya* (2nd Ed., p. 630) speaks of a MS. of this work which is, in his vague language, about 150 years old.

চান্দ দানিরায় চিকনাঠাকুর মাখনচোর গোপীজনবল্লব এবং অনেক ২ বিগ্রহ আছেন অসংক্ষী সংক্ষা কে করিবেক প্রতি ব্রজবাসীর ঘরে ঘরে সেবা অসংক্ষ আছেন অতিত কেহ চুটকি করেন কেহ মাধুকুরি বিরক্ত ঠাকুরেরা ব্রহ্মকুণ্ডে কেশীঘাটে পূলিনবনে বংশীবটে ধিরসমিরে চিরঘাটে ও জুগলঘাটে ওকালি-দহে এবং আর ২ অনেক ২ স্থানে ২ আছেন ঞিহারদিগের বিনা আওতানে কোথাও গমনাগমন নাঞী জন্তপীব মহোৎসব করিয়া কেহ সামিগ্রী আনিঞা নিকটে দেন তাহা দৈবে লএন নতুবা ঞিহারদিগের ভিক্ষাকরণ নাঞী ঞিহারা অজাচক হয়েন আটদষ উপবাস হয় কেবল জুমুনাজীর জল আহার তথাচ কান্তির শৌন্দর্য্য বড়ই শ্রীশ্রীবৃন্দাবনের দক্ষিনে তিন ক্রোষ মথুরা মথুরার উত্তরে জমুনাজির পশ্চিমধারে অক্রুরঘাট কংশের আদেসে নন্দীপুর হইতে কৃষ্ণবলরামকে মথুরা আনিতে জে ঘাটে কৃষ্ণ বলরামকে ডাঙ্গায় রথে রাখিয়া অক্রুর স্নান করিয়াছিলেন তাহাতে অক্রুর ঠাকুর জখন স্নান করেন তখন ডুব দেওনের কালে জলের ভিতর রথস্ত কৃষ্ণবলরামকে দেখিলেন বিস্ময় হইয়া মস্তক তুলিয়া ডাঙ্গায় দৃষ্টী করিয়া দেখেন পুর্ব্বমত ডাঙ্গায় রথ আরোহনে আছেন পুনঃ পুনঃ কয়েকবার দেখিলেন যা বুঝিলেন নিরস্ত হইলেন সে ঘাটের পশ্চীমে অক্রুরঠাকুরের একখানি গ্রাম আছেন তাহাতে এক সেবা আছেন তাহার দক্ষিনে মথুরা সহর মধ্যে বিশ্রান্তঘাট কৃষ্ণবলরাম রথ হইতে নাম্বিয়া সেই ঘাটে বশীয়াছিলেন জমুনাজীর জল পান করিয়াছিলেন পুর্ব্ব দিগে শূর্য্যঘাট সেখানে বান রাজা তপস্যা করিয়াছিলেন তাহার পুর্ব্ব ধ্রুবঘাট সেখানে ধ্রুবঠাকুর পঞ্চবৎসরের কালে তপস্যা করিয়াছিলেন আর আর চব্বিষ ঘাট আছেন মথুরার মধ্যখানে সেখানে কেশো রায়জীর মন্দির মথুরার পশ্চীমদিগে কারাগার জেখানে বসুদেব দৈবকি নিগুড়বন্ধনে ছিলেন সেস্থানে দৈবকিঠাকুরানি প্রসব হইয়া-ছিলেন সে স্থান অদ্যাবধি প্রকট আছেন মথুরার দক্ষিনদিগে কংস রাজার আবাষ এবং দক্ষিন দিগ পুর্ব্বমশ্চীম পর্য্যন্ত গড় আছে অতি উচ্চতর গড়ের মধ্যখানে এক সিবঠাকুর আছেন জে সিব কংসরাজা পুজা করিতেন মথুরার দক্ষিনে অর্দ্ধক্রোষ সান্তানুকুণ্ড সেখানে ঠাকুরেরা মধুপান করিয়াছিলেন তালবনের রক্ষক ধেনুক নামে এক অসুর ছিল তাহাকে বধ করিয়াছেন

সেখানে এখন তালগাছ নাঞী তাহার উত্তরে একক্রোষ কুমুদবন এক কুণ্ড বড় আছে তাহাতে অদ্যাবধি অনেক কুমুদ হয় তাহার পশ্চিমে এক ক্রোষ বহুলবন তাহার পশ্চীম দক্ষিন চারি ক্রোষ রাধাকুণ্ড তাহার পুর্ব্বে শ্যামকুণ্ড দুই কুণ্ডে একত্রে মিলন কিন্তু মধ্যে প্রস্তরের সাঁকো সকল আছেন মধ্যে মধ্যে মুরি সকল আছে জলের গমনাগমন সদা হইতেছেন শ্যামকুণ্ডের উত্তরে ললিতাকুণ্ড তাহা[তে]ও ঐ প্রকার সাঁকো ও মুরি আছে শ্যামকুণ্ডের দক্ষিনে তমাল বৃক্ষ ইসানে গোবিন্দজীর ঘেরা রাধাকুণ্ডের বসত বড় সহস্র সহস্র অতিত আছেন রাধাকুণ্ডের দক্ষিনে এক ক্রোষ গোবর্দ্ধন পর্ব্বত মউরাকৃতি উত্তর দক্ষিনা পর্ব্বত রাধাকুণ্ড শ্যামকুণ্ড দুই নেত্র হএন গোবর্দ্ধন পর্ব্বতের উত্তরদিগে পুর্ব্বধারে কৃষ্ণের চরণ চিহ্ন তাহাব দক্ষিনে প্রায় মধ্যখানে মানশী গঙ্গা বিস্তারিত বড় মধ্যে মধ্যে বাঁকা বাঁকা আছেন জল অদ্যাপি দুগ্ধবত চতুর্দ্দিগে প্রস্তরের বান্দা চারিদিগে বসত এবং অতিতের কুঠরি মানস গঙ্গার পশ্চিমদিগে ব্রজে[র] রাজা বদন সিংহ তাহার এক বাটী বড় চিত্র বিচিত্র তাহার উত্তরদিগে সনাতন গোসাঁঞের ভজন কঠরি এবং চারি মন্দিরে চারি সিব ঠাকুর আছেন চক্রতির্থ বলিপর্ব্বতের উপর নানান বন নানান জাতিয় বৃক্ষ পত্র পল্লবাদী সদা মেঘবর্ন্ন এবং পর্ব্বত মেঘের যোতি মধ্যখানে পুরি রায়জীর মন্দির ব্রহ্মকুণ্ডের দক্ষিন ব্রহ্মকুণ্ডে গোপাল রায়জীর মন্দির জিহোঁ গোবর্দ্ধন পর্ব্বত ধারন করিয়াছিলেন নানান জাতিয় বিক্ষ এবং নানান পক্ষ নানান ধ্বনি করিতেছেন।

It is impossible not to be struck with the realitive excellence of these passages. In the first place, we notice, here a really remarkable attempt at substained prose-writing, a great advance in the facility of handling and a positive tendency to vivacity. In the next place, the widening and varying of the range and methods of prose by its application to new subjects is a fact of great significance;

Application of prose to new subjects

Descriptive prose

and it is this application of prose to pure narration, description, or conveyance of information in a straightforward intelligible way—childish things of prose, no doubt, but its best exercising ground in infancy—that gives it an ease and fluency attained here for the first time in its history. The description, though a little monotonous, are yet not dry: but the very pictorial-poetical nature of the subject-matter often enables the writer to strike into something like style in its proper sense. Here is another passage :—

তাহার উত্তরে একপোয়া পথচারন পাহাড়ি পর্ব্বতের উপরে কৃষ্ণচন্দ্রের চরণ চিহ্ন ধেনু বৎসের এবং উঠের এবং মহিশের এবং ছেলির এবং আর আর অনেকের পদচিহ্ন আছেন জে দিবস ধেনু লইয়া শেই পর্ব্বতে গিয়াছিলেন সে দিবস মুরলির গানে জমুনা উজান বহিয়াছিলেন এবং পাসান গলিয়াছিলেন সেই দিবস এই সকল পদচিহ্ন হইয়াছেন। গয়াতে গোবর্দ্ধনে এবং কাম্যবনে এবং চরণ পাহাড়িতে এই চারি স্থানে চিহ্ন এক সমতুল ইহাতে কিছু তরতম নাঞী চরণ পাহাড়ির উত্তরে দুই ক্রোষ বড় বেস শাহি তাহার উত্তরে ছোট বেস শাহি তাহাতে এক লক্ষীনারায়নের এক সেবা আছেন তাহার পুর্ব্ব দক্ষিন সেরগড় তাহার পুর্ব্ব উজান এবং জমুনা তাহার দক্ষিনে অক্ষয় বট তাহার দক্ষিনে তপোবন তাহার পুর্ব্বে নন্দঘাট জে ঘাটে নন্দকে বরুন হরিয়াছিলেন। অথ॥ যমুনাজীর পার ভদ্রবন সেখানে ঠাকুরেরা ভদ্র করিয়াছিলেন তাহার দক্ষিনে ভাণ্ডিরবন সেখানে ঠাকুরেরা ভাঁটা খেলাইয়াছিলেন তাহার দক্ষিনে সূর্য্যঘাট তাহার দক্ষিনে চিরঘাট জে ঘাটে গোপিকাদিগের বস্ত্র হরন করিয়াছিলেন বস্ত্র কদম্বগাছে বান্দীয়া রাখিয়াছিলেন সে কদম্বগাছে অদ্যাপি পূর্ব্বমত আছেন।.....পুনশ্চ মথুরায় অনেক মহাজন আছেন আট দস হাজার গুজরাতি ব্রাহ্মন আছেন সন্ধ্যাকালে বিশ্রান্তঘাটে জমুনাজীর আরতি হয়েন শহশ্র শহশ্র লোক জমা হয়েন দুই প্রহর রাত্রি তক নাম সঙ্কির্ত্তন হয়েন পুনশ্চ মথুরার উত্তর তিন ক্রোষ শ্রীবৃন্দাবন গোবিন্দজিউর ঘেরার পুর্ব্ব বেনুকুপ গোপিনাথজীর ঘেরার দক্ষিন পশ্চীম নিধু

বন চতুর্দ্দিগে পাকা প্রাচির পুর্ব্বপশ্চীমা বন পশ্চীমদিগের দরওয়াজা কুঞ্জের ভিতর জাইতে বামদিগে এক অট্টালিকা অতি গোপনিয় স্থান বাঙ্গলাবন্দ মন্দির সুন্দর বড়ই নিধুবনের রক্ষক সহশ্র সহশ্র বানব বানরি সকল আছেন নানান বর্ন্নে বৃক্ষ পত্র পল্লবাদি অতি কোমল নানান পুষ্প শকল বিকসিত কোকীলাদী নানান পক্ষ নানান মত ধ্বনি করিতেছেন বনের শৌন্দর্য্য কে বর্ন্ন করিবেক শ্রীবৃন্দাবনের মধ্যে মহন্তের ও মহাজনের ও রাজাদিগের বহু কুঞ্জ আছেন নিধুবনের পশ্চীমে কিছু তুর হয় নিভৃত নিকুঞ্জ জে স্থানে ঠাকুরাণীজীও সখি সকল লইয়া বেসবিন্যাষ করিতেন ঠাকুরাণীজীওর পদচিহ্ন আছেন নিত্য পুজা হয়েন নিভৃত নিকুঞ্জের পুর্ব্বে শ্রীশ্রীঅদৈত মহাপ্রভূর কুঞ্জ তাহার ইসানে মহাপ্রভূর মন্দীর উত্তরে আমলি গাছ এবং যমুনাজীর গোবিন্দজীর ঘেরার পশ্চীমে মহারাসস্থল তাহার মধ্যে কিত্তিচন্দ্র রায়ের কুঞ্জ বড় অনেক অতিত আছেন তাহার দক্ষিনে বারানশা সেটের কুঞ্জ অতি রম্য স্থান শ্রীবৃন্দাবনের উত্তরে এক বাউকোনে জমনাজী শ্রীবৃন্দাবনে জে জেথানে বানর বানরি আছেন সকল রাজারা রোজবন্দি ভক্ষসামিগ্রী বন্দান করিয়া দিয়াছেন।

There are of course still many drawbacks and disadvantages of vocabulary and syntax: we have occasional intrusion of definite and not merely accidental alliteration, inherited from the traditions of verse-forms and some of the lines are no doubt capable of exact stave-division: but one does not really want faultless precocity at the outset; and after all is said, it must be admitted that here there is no longer any falling back upon the tricks of verse and other uncongenial things and that the rhythm attained is not really poetic rhythm but it is something approaching, in however groping fashion, to the creation of definite prose-rhythm with its balance of phrase, its variation of long and short sentences, and its natural adjustment of clauses with due regard to general harmonic effect.

Characteristics of this prose.

There are specimens of another work, supposed to date from the 18th century, called *Bṛndābana Parikramā* of which passages are quoted by Dineschandra Sen in *Baṅga Sāhitya Parichaya* (vol. ii, p. 1674) from a MSS. dated B.S. 1218. This composition, like the *Bṛndābana-līlā*, also purports to be a description of the holy place—a fact which seems to indicate that works of this nature were more numerous than usually supposed. The same characteristic descriptive style is also illustrated here and it is needless to quote here a longer passage than the following :

Bṛndābana Parikramā.

Specimens of its prose.

তাহার অগ্নিকোণে রাসস্থল কিশোরীবট সেই স্থানে গুপ্তস্থল জাবট গ্রামের পশ্চিম কোকিল-বন কোকিলের কুলি হইতেছে শ্রীমতী শুনিয়াছিলেন সেই স্থানে এক কুণ্ড তাহাতে কেলিকদম্বের গাছ বেষ্টিত আছে তাহা হইতে দুই ক্রোশ চরণপাহাড়ী তাহার উপর শ্রীবলরামজীএর চরণ-চিহ্ন ১ হাত প্রস্থ অষ্ট অঙ্গুলি শ্রীকৃষ্ণের চরণ-চিহ্ন তিন পোয়া প্রস্থ সাত অঙ্গুলি ঐ পাহাড়েতে গোধনের পাঁজ আর মোষের পাঁজ আর উটের পাঁজ সেই পাহাড়েতে দুইভাই মুরলীধ্বনি করিয়াছিলেন পাহাড়ে হাঁটুগাড়া চিহ্ন আছে তাহার পশ্চিম সাত ঘর্য্যা খেলার চিহ্ন আছে তাহার পশ্চিম চরণগঙ্গা তাহার দক্ষিণ অর্দ্ধ ক্রোশ বড় বেটনগ্রাম তাহাতে সেবা শ্রীমুরলীধর ঠাকুর জীউ।

From the dry pseudo-metaphysical exposition of the Sahajiyā works to this 18th century descriptive prose is indeed a long step : but this extraordinary development, apparently puzzling, will be intelligible when we take into account the fact that early Bengali poetical literature by this time had attained a very high degree of relative perfection and was by this process preparing the way for the creation of a literary language in general. The resources of the language and its literary

capacities were now brought within easy reach of any prose-writer—although such writers were not plentiful—who would have had chosen to utilise them. The wonderfully rapid and accomplished literary development of prose in the 19th century caught up, summed, and uttered in more perfect form this literary heritage of past ages but even in a period of scanty prose-production such as the 18th century, in which verse-treatment of every subject was still predominant, we cannot mistake the influence of the enormous literary perfection of the language in general on whatever little prose it produced.

Development of the literary language in general.

It may be necessary in this connexion to indicate the influence of Sanscrit learning on early Bengali prose-writing. It is pretty certain that the specimens of such prose as we possess, whether of the metaphysical or the descriptive sort, represent periods when Sanscrit culture of some kind, was already open to and in some degree had been enjoyed by the writers. Not only occasional Sanscrit forms and technicalities are perceived and some Sanscrit works on Law and Logic were directly translated, but the general tendency, inspite of occasional easy note of works like *Bṛndābana-līlā*, was towards sanscritised, if not ornate, diction, although no effective Sanscrit influence, with its predilection for long-drawn-out compound words, complex sentence-framing, and other things, may be definitely traced anywhere. This prose-manner, however, cannot be called sanscritic in the sense in which it is used to designate the pedantic affectation of some of the Fort William College pundits or the Sanscrit College style of the fifties ; and it is remarkable that with hardly any model before

Influence of Sanscrit.

them, these writers never chose to imitate the later sesquipedalian Sanscrit prose style of *Kādambarī* or *Harṣacharita*. Much has been written, however, on the Sanscrit influence which is supposed to have come through the *Kathakas* or professional story-tellers, whose manner and method of exposition is said to have considerably moulded the narrative or descriptive literature of the type in question : but it must be admitted that though sometimes their "set passages" evince a highly artistic or poetic style, their bombastically ornate diction and artificial arrangement, their predilection for sanscritic forms and long-balanced sentences, their highly cadenced rhetorical eloquence label their prose-passages at once as essentially one of the ornate kind showing little colour of resemblance to the type of prose we are discussing.

In the absence of any material to go upon, it is impossible to indicate how far the experiment in descriptive prose of the literaay kind, such as we find in the *Bṛnāban-līlā* or *Bṛndāban-parikramā*, was followed upon in any other prose-writing of the period but the existence and popularity of such contemporary descriptive poems as *Kāśī-parikramā* of Jayanarāyan would seem to indicate, inspite of occasional and timid trespass, the still exclusive monopoly of verse in the domain of such literature. The excursion of prose, however, beyond the narrow limits of metaphysical matter was an attempt the lesson of which was perhaps not wholly lost. From the few prose pieces of that century which have come down to us, we find application of prose in treatises on law, logic, and medicine, subjects hitherto attempted, as all subjects were, in verse. Although only a few such works have yet been discovered, it is quite

Miscellaneous prose writings.

plausible that such attempts were not sporadic or isolated but were more numerous and deliberate than the scanty remains would justify us to infer. One limitation still remains, namely, that of translation (for most of these works are translations or adaptations from Sanscrit originals) : but translation in the school-time of Bengali prose is not a drawback or disadvantage but a distinct means of attaining diversity, adequacy and accomplishment. Here is a very simple passage from a manuscript (about 200 years old) on medicine called কবিরাজী পাতড়া (*Kabirāji Pāṭḍā*) which gives a recipe for dyspepsia : [1]

Not sporadic or isolated attempts.

A treatise on Medicine

বাই অম্বলের প্রতিকার। শুপারি খণ্ড। শুপারি কাটিয়া জলেতে সিদ্ধ করিব। তবে দুগ্ধে সিজাইব। শুষ্ক করিয়া গুঁড়া করিব। তবে বকাল তোলাইব। ধন্যা ত্রিকটু গুড়ঞ্চক (?) জৈষ্ঠমধু তেজপত্র এলাইচ নাগেশ্বর তালিশপত্র রক্তচন্দন পদ্মকাষ্ঠ দেবদারু কালজিরা মহুরী লবঙ্গ।..... শুঁঠিখণ্ড। শুঁঠি ৪ তোলা নবাত ১৬ সের দুগ্ধ ১৯৬। শুঁঠি চূর্ণ করিব। এ তিনপাদ আটিব। তবে বকাল দিব। ধন্যা জিরা মৃথা পিপুল বংশলোচন গুড়ঞ্চ এলাইচ তেজপত্র কালজিরা হরিতকী মরীচ নাগেশ্বর এষাং প্রতি ২ তোলা এ সব চূর্ণ করিয়া দুগ্ধে সিজাইব। তবে সিদ্ধ হইলে মউ দিব। তবে সিদ্ধ হয়। ইহার শূল ঘুচে। আম্বল পীত্তি ঘুচে। বুক বেথা ঘুচে। আম্বল হইতে যে ২ বলবান হয় তাহা ঘুচে। ইহার নাম শুঁটিখণ্ড।

The following passage is from a work on the "Philosophy of Grammar" called *Bhāṣā-parichchhēda* (ভাষা পরিচ্ছেদ) (MS. dated B.S. 1181) apparently a translation of the Sanscrit original of the same name. The beginning runs thus :

and on the philosophy of grammar.

[1] The text given here, a little modernised perhaps in spelling, follows the quotation in *S. P. Patr.* 1306, no. 1, p. 51.

গোতন মুনিকে শিষ্য সকলে জিজ্ঞাসা করিলেন, আমারদিগের মুক্তি কি প্রকারে হয় তাহা কৃপা করিয়া বলহ। তাহাতে গোতম উত্তর করিতেছেন তাবৎ পদার্থ জানিলেই মুক্তি হয়। তাহাতে শিষ্যেরা সকলে জিজ্ঞাসা করিলেন পদার্থ কতো। তাহাতে গোতম কহিতেছেন। পদার্থ সপ্ত প্রকার। দ্রব্য গুণ কর্ম্ম সামান্য বিশেষ সমবায় অভাব। তাহার মধ্যে দ্রব্য নয় প্রকার।

Again

মীমাংসা মতে কর্ত্তাত্মক শব্দ নিজে ধ্বন্যাত্মক শব্দ জন্য বর্ণাত্মক শব্দকে ঈশ্বর কহেন মীমাংসকেরা পরমাত্মা মানেন না। অতঃপর কর্ম্মের পরিচয় কহিতেছি। .....ব্যাপারবৎ কারণের নাম করণ। কারণ জন্য হইয়া কার্য্যজনক যে হয় তাহার নাম ব্যাপার।.....অনুমিতির অপর কারণ পক্ষতা আছে। ইহাতে প্রাচীন পণ্ডিতেরা কহেন পর্ব্বতে বহ্নি সন্দেহের নাম পক্ষতা। এ কথা ভালো নহে কারণ যে হয় সে অবশ্য কার্য্যের অব্যবহিত পূর্ব্ব ক্ষণেতে থাকে। প্রথম ক্ষণে সাধ্য সংশয় পরে ব্যাপ্তির স্মৃতি পরে পরামর্শ। তবে পরামর্শ কালে সংশয় নষ্ট হইলে অনুমিতির পূর্ব্বক্ষণ পরামর্শ ক্ষণ হয় সে ক্ষণে সংশয় থাকিল না। জ্ঞান ইচ্ছা দ্বেষকৃত সুখদুঃখ। ইহারা দ্বিক্ষণ স্থায়ী পদার্থ ত্রিক্ষণে নষ্ট হয় জানিবে।[1]

From a work on law and ritual called *Byabasthā-tatva* [2]

অথ অপালন নিমিত্তক গোবধ প্রায়শ্চিত্ত ব্যবস্থা। সর্ব্বথা প্রকারে প্রতিপালন না করে ইহাতে শীত অনিল উদ্বন্ধন শূন্যাগার জলমধ্য অগ্নিদাহ পতন গর্ত্তে ব্রাঘ্র ইত্যাদি নিমিত্তক যদি গোবধ হয় তবে অর্দ্ধ

[1] This passage is taken from a notice of the manuscript in question in *S. P. Patrikā*, 1304. p. 325 : the text is obviously punctuated and modernised in spelling. More specimens of this prose would have been welcome, but unfortunately only these two passages are given. I have not been able to get access to the manuscript itself.

[2] This curious manuscript is noticed in *S. P. Patrikā*, 1 308, p. 43 from which the above quotation is taken. It is written in Sanscrit but part of it is in Bengali prose. The date of the manuscript is 1235 B.S.

গোচর্ম্ম গাত্রে দিঞা গোসহিত প্রত্যহ যাতায়াংরূপ ইতিকর্ত্তব্যতা করিঞা প্রজাপত্যব্রত প্রায়শ্চিত্ত হয়। যদি ইতিকর্ত্তব্যতা না কোরিতে পারে তবে ইতিকর্ত্তব্যতার অনুকল্প এক প্রাজাপত্য হয়। অতএব প্রাজাপত্য দুই প্রায়শ্চিত্ত হয়। তদ অনুকল্প ষট্ কার্ষাপন বরাটিকা দিবেক। ইহাতে এক সামান্য গোদক্ষিণা হয় তদনুকল্প বৃষমূল্য পঞ্চ কার্ষ্যা সামান্য গোমূল্য এক কার্ষাপন এবং ষট্ কার্ষাপন বরাটিকা দক্ষিণা হয়। ইহাতে বিশেষ বচনপ্রাপ্ত শূদ্রের প্রাজাপত্য দুই প্রায়শ্চিত্ত হয়।

The stiffness of the subject and style of the original is, no doubt, partially responsible for the want of ease or fluency in the translation : but the very fact that the translator had to keep himself close to his original gave him a more correct syntax and a precision and condensation of language, eminently suited for such exposition but differing greatly from the sententious manner of the previous age.

Even the theological literature assumed a more orderly style. This will be illustrated from the following short passage from *Gñānādisādhanā*, quoted in *Bangla Sāhitya Parichaya*.[1]

A passage from *Gñānādi Sādhanā*.

পরে অজ্ঞানী নিত্য জনে হৈয়া সেই সাধুকে শ্রীগুরু জ্ঞান করিয়া জিজ্ঞাসা করেন আমাকে কৃপা করিয়া আত্মজ্ঞান জন্মাইয়া পরে নিত্য শ্রীনবদ্বীপের শ্রীকৃষ্ণ চৈতন্যকে পৃথক দেখাইয়া নিত্য শ্রীবৃন্দাবনের পরমেশ্বর শ্রীকৃষ্ণাদিকে দেখাইয়া কৃতার্থ করিলেন। পরে সেই সাধু কৃপা করিয়া সেই অজ্ঞান জনকে চৈতন্য করিয়া তাহার শরীরের মধ্যে জীবাত্মাকে প্রত্যক্ষ দেখাইয়া পরে তাহার বাম কর্ণেতে শ্রীচৈতন্য মন্ত্র কহিয়া পরে

[1] Vol. II, pp. 1630-37. This MS. dated 1158 B. S. is also noticed in *S. P. Patrika*, 1304, p. 341, where it is called *Sādhana Kathā*. The text as given in these places are obviously punctuated and corrected in spelling.

সেই চৈতন্য মন্ত্রের অর্থ জানাইয়া পরে সেই জীব দ্বারাএ দশ ইন্দ্রিয়াদিযুক্ত নিত্য শরীর দেখাইয়া পরে সাধক অভিমানে শ্রীকৃষ্ণাদির রূপ আরোপ চিন্তাতে দেখাইয়া পরে সিদ্ধি অভিমান শ্রীকৃষ্ণাদির মুক্তি পৃথক দেখাইয়া প্রেমলক্ষণার সমাধি ভক্তিতে সংস্থাপন করিলেন। পরে সেই অজ্ঞানী জন এইপ্রকার সেই গুরু হইতে আপনার আত্মাকে পৃথক দেখিয়া পরে নিত্য শ্রীনবদ্বীপের শ্রীকৃষ্ণচৈতন্য মহাপ্রভুকে পৃথক দেখিয়া পরে সাধক দেখিয়া অভিমানে শ্রীরাধাকৃষ্ণাদি পৃথক প্রেমলক্ষণা রসময়ী ভক্তি করিয়া নিত্য রসে বিরাজ করিলে পুনর্ব্বার সেই গুরুস্থানে কহেন আপনে আমার জ্ঞানদাতা শ্রীগুরু আপনি আমার জ্ঞান জন্মাইয়াছেন কি না তাহা বুঝিবার কারণ আমাকে জিজ্ঞাসা করিয়াছেন তাহাতে আপনি আমাকে যে প্রকার জ্ঞান জন্মাইয়াছেন তাহাতে আমি যে প্রকার বুঝিয়াছি তেমত কহিলাম। পরে সেই জ্ঞানদাতা শ্রীগুরু শিষ্যকে আলিঙ্গন করিয়া আশীর্ব্বাদ কহিলেন তুমার সুজ্ঞানআদি জন্মিয়াছে তুমি শ্রীবৃন্দাবনে প্রেমলক্ষণা রসময়ী ভক্তিতে বিরাজ কর ॥ ইতি ॥

All this is indeed a great advance towards periodic or balanced prose. The syntax is not irregular: the verb is not dropped or shifted at will: the clauses are not clumsily thrown together or inverted with complete disregard of general harmony: in short, the whole trend is a movement towards maturity and not decline, and, if it is not too sweeping to generalise, towards modernity itself.

Advance towards maturity not decline.

It would not be strictly proper to take into account, as specimens of literary style, the prose of a few deeds and documents which have come down from the 17th and 18th centuries but this "documentary" prose though seldom rising into art, indicate, that by application of prose to an infinite variety of subjects, the right direction was being taken towards systematic prose-writing,

Prose of deeds and documents: what they illustrate.

towards the creation of a prose-of-all-work. In those days of Persian ascendancy, the application of Bengali to these documents is a fact significant in itself : and these specimens show vernacular letter-writing, one of the most powerful instruments in the formation of a general prose style, in full operation. Before the Third Literary Conference in North Bengal (1316 B. S.), the President in his address quoted specimens of two Bengali letters written by Assamese Kings, one of which dates back to 1477 and the other to 1553 Śaka.[1] We quote here the first named letter dated 1477, written by Rājā Naranārāyan to the Ahome King Chukāmfā Svargadeva

Specimens of two old letters.

স্বস্তি সকল দিগ্‌দন্তি-কর্ণাস্ফালসমীরণপ্রচলিতহিমকরহারহাসকাশ-কৈলাসপাণ্ডরযশোরাশিবিরাজিতত্রিপিষ্টপত্রিদশতরঙ্গিণনিস্মলপবিত্রকলে-বরধীষণধীর ধৈর্য্যমর্য্যাদাপারাবার সকলদিক্‌কামিনীগীয়মানগুণসন্তান শ্রী শ্রীস্বর্গনারায়ণ মহারাজ প্রচণ্ডপ্রতাপেষু।

লেখনং কার্য্যঞ্চ। এথা আমার কুশল। তোমার কুশল নিরন্তরে বাঞ্ছা করি। অথন তোমার আমার সন্তোষসম্পাদক পত্রাপত্রি গতায়াত হইলে উভয়ান্বকুল প্রীতির বীজ অঙ্কুরিত হইতে রহে। তোমার আমার কর্ত্তব্যে সে বন্ধতাক পাই পুষ্পিত ফলিত হইবেক। আমরা সেই উদ্যোগত আছি। তোমারো এগোট কর্ত্তব্য উচিত হয়। না কর তাক আপনে জান। অধিক কি লেখিম। সত্যানন্দ কম্মী রামেশ্বর শম্মা কালকেতু ও ধুমা সর্দ্দার উদ্দণ্ড চাউনিয়া শ্যামরাই ইমরাক পাঠাইতেছি তামরার মুখে সকল সমাচার বুঝিয়া চিতাপ বিদায় দিবা।

[1] Reports of the Conference (*Uttara Banga Sāhitya Sammilana, Tritiya Adhibesana, Kāryabibaraṇī*), pp. 35-37. These were first published in *Āsambāri*, June 37, 1901, and August 1, 1901. The first of these letters has been (without any indication of its source) reprinted in *Banga Sāhitya Parichaya*, vol. ii, p. 1672.

Here is an extract from the second letter dated 1553 Śaka written by the Assamese King to Mohammedan Faujdār Nawāb Aleyār Khān of Gauhāti

স্বস্তি বিবিধ গুণগাম্ভীর্য্যপরমোদার শ্রীযুক্ত নবাব আলেয়ার খাঁ সদাশয়েষু।

সস্নেহ লিখনং কার্য্যঞ্চ। আগে এথা কুশল। তোমার কুশল সততে চাহি। পরং সমাচারপত্র এহি। এখন তোমার উকিল পত্রসহ আসিয়া আমার স্থান পহুঁছিল। আমিও প্রীতিপ্রণয়পূর্ব্বক জ্ঞাত হইলাম। আর তুমি যে লিখিয়াছ তোমার উত্তম পত্র আসিতে আমার কিঞ্চিৎ মনস্বিতা না রহে এযে তোমার ভালাই দৌলত। অতএব আমিও পরম আহ্লাদরূপে জানিতে আছো তোমার আমার অদ্বয়ভাব প্রীতি ঘটিলে মনমাফিক সন্তোষ কি কারণ না হইবেক। আর তোমার আমার অত্যন্তরূপে আনন্দযুক্ত হইলে উভয় পক্ষ লোকের নাবিদ্বেশরূপ অবিযুতা অন্তশেত কিসক না রহিবেক। এ কারণ তুমি লেখিবাক পোরা।

Extract from Nandakumār's letter to Gurudās.

From the letter of Nandakumār to his son Gurudās published in the *Sāhitya Parisal Patrikā* (B.S. 1310, pp. 62-65)[1].

তোমার মঙ্গল সর্ব্বদা বাসনা করনক অত্র কুশল পরন্তঃ ২৫ তারিখের পত্র ২৭ রোজ রাত্রে পাইয়া সমাচার জানিলাম শ্রীযুত ফেতরত আলিখাঁ এর এখানে আইশনের সম্বাদ জে লিখিয়াছিলে এতক্ষণতক পঁহুচেন নাই পহুচিলেই জানা জাইবেক শ্রীযুত রায় জগৎচন্দ্র বিষ রোজের পর বাটি হইতে আসিয়াছেন যেমত ২ কুচেষ্টা পাইতেছেন তাহা জানাই গেল তিনি যথা ২ জাউন ফলত কার্য্যের দ্বারাতেই বুঝিবেন পষ্ট হইয়া আপনারি মন্দ করিতেছেন সে সকল লোকেও অবশ্য বুঝিবেক তুমি শ্রীযুত মেস্ত্র

[1] For the history and text of these documents, see *S. P. Patrikā*, 1306, pp. 297-301 and *ibid*, 1308. The text, however, is taken from a very modern copy of the original. They are reprinted in *Baṅga Sāhitya Parichaya*, vol. ii, pp. 1638-43.

মেদলটীন সাহেবের নিকট জাতায়াত করিবে একথত তাঁহাকে লিখিলাম দিয়া নিরালা সকল কহিবে ও সুনিবে তখন জেরূপ কথোপকথন হয় তাহার মত করিবে তিঁহ চিত্তে জানেন জে আমার কথাক্রমেই ইনি কার্য্য করিতেছেন সুন্দররূপ তাঁহার সহিত মিলিবে কোনও বিশএ উদ্বিগ্ন নহিবে।

A passage from old document.

This is not absolutely despicable writing, even though in the last extract there is an inevitable tincture of Persian, due partly perhaps to the fact that it was addressed to a Mohammedan Nawāb. The same tendency is illustrated by the documents, dated B. S. 1125 and 1137, relating to the Baiṣṇab triumph of Rādhā Mohan Dās Ṭhākur[1] which were published and edited by R. Tribedī in the *Patrikā* : from which it is needless to quote more than the following short illustrative extract. It speaks of the পরকীয় doctrine.[2]

পরে আমরা কহিলাম গৌড়দেশে শ্রীশ্রী৺ প্রভুর পাদাঙ্কিত স্থান সেথানে শ্রীশ্রী৺ ভাগবত শাস্ত্রী আছেন এবং সভাসৎ স্থান আছেন তাহারা মহোপাধ্যায় বিচার হইবেক গৌড়ে পরকীয় ধর্ম্মের অধিকারী তাহারা স্বকীয় ধর্ম্ম লবে কেন এথানে যেমৎ সভাসদ্ হইল গৌড়দেশে অনেক সভাসদ্ আছে বিচার করিবেক অতএব এথানকার সভাসদ্ এক পণ্ডিত ও এক মনস্বোপদার যায় তবে বিচার করিয়া স্বকীয় ধর্ম্ম সংস্থাপন করিয়া আইসে তাহাতে সর্ব্বসম্মত মতে শ্রীযুত মহারাজা সভাসদ্ শ্রীযুত

[1] Some letters of Nandakumār dated 1756 are published by Beveridge in the *National Magazine* (September, 1872). The letter of which quotation is given is dated 1772.

[2] In this connection it is necessary to mention the documents relating to the affairs of Lālā Udayanārāyaṇ Rāy, published in the *Patrikā*, 1308, pp. 243-54. Inspite of a slight admixture of Persian, here we have good specimens of descriptive prose. The passages, however, are too lengthy for full quotation here.

কৃষ্ণদেব ভট্টাচার্য্য জিঁহো স্বকীয় পরকীয় বিভিন্ন করিলেন তিঁহো দিগ্বিজয় মহারাজার সভা হইতে তাহাকে আনিয়া এবং এক মনস্বোবদার সহিত প্রয়াগ ও কাশী হইয়া আইলাম তারাও স্বকীয়ায় দস্তখত করিয়া দিলেন পরে গৌড়দেশে আসিয়া গোস্বামীগণ ও মহান্তসন্তান মহান্তশাখাগণ যে যে স্থানে আছেন সর্ব্বত্র অনেক বিচার হইল সকলে বিচারে দিগ্বিজয়ী স্থানে অজয়পত্র দিলেন পরে শ্রীপাটখণ্ডে আইলাম তাঁহাদের সহিত অনেক কথোপকথন হইল তাহারা কহিলেন আমরা শ্রীশ্রী৺ মহাপ্রভু মতাবলম্বী তাঁহার মতাধিকারী শ্রীশ্রী৺ ছয় গোস্বামী তাঁহারা যে মত অবলম্ব গ্রহণ করিয়াছেন সেই মত আমরা যাজন করি সেই সব মতের সার গোস্বামীরা বেদ-প্রাণিত এবং ওম্-প্রাণিত এবং রস-প্রাণিত যে সকল ভাগবত শাস্ত্র করিয়াছেন তাহা ব্যতিরেক করিয়া আমরা স্বকীয়ায় কিমত দস্তখত করিব অতএব শ্রীযুত গোস্বামীর গাদির গ্রন্থশাস্ত্রে অধিকারী শ্রীশ্রী৺ চিনিবাস আচার্য্য ঠাকুর তাহার সন্তান সকল আছেন তাহাদের স্থানে আগে দস্তখত করাহ তবে আমরাহ দস্তখত করিয়া দিব এ কথায় আমরা শ্রীপাট যাজিগ্রাম যাইয়া দখল করিতে কহিলেন আমরা স্বকীয়ার দস্তখত বিনা বিচারে পারিব না আমরা শ্রীচৈতন্য মহাপ্রভুর মতাবলম্বী অতএব বিচারে যে ধর্ম্ম স্থায়ী হয় তাহাই লইবে এই মত করার হইল বিচার মানিলাম তাহাতে পাতসাই শুভা শ্রীযুত নবাব জাফর খাঁ সাহেব নিকট দরখাস্ত হইল তিঁহো কহিলেন ধর্ম্মাধর্ম্ম বিনা তজবিজ হয় না অতএব বিচার কবুল করিলেন সেই মত সভাসদ হইল।

These 17th and 18th century documents and other prose pieces show that even in the hands or mouths of people, who cannot be strictly called literary, the vernacular in that stage of prose-writing had quite got out of mere rusticity or childish babblement. The stage of apprenticeship was indeed not over but it is good straight-forward Bengali attaining sufficient

Summary of the achievements of old Bengali prose.

rhythmical and verbal dignity and showing the way to better things if it had suited the writers to write more originally in prose. Treatises on law, medicine, and similar documents or esoteric theological writing can seldom, in the very nature of the case, lay claim to literary competency or to the motive power of style; but the description of Bṛndāban and such other things gives better opportunities and, rude though the resources of form and model were, yet such as they were, they were used with sufficient skill. This, though qualified, is high praise indeed. Full and mature prose style is yet to come; indeed style in the strict and rare sense had scarcely been attained or consciously attempted. The necessary stock of material was yet to be accumulated, the necessary plant and method of working to be slowly and painfully elaborated. There was still clumsiness and uncouth handling inseparable from earliness and immaturity. These Sahajiyā and other works again written, as they were, for an exclusive and esoteric sect and in a difficult language were not very widely known or easily accessible to all: in fact, their general influence was not much and this may be one reason why their very laudable attempt at vernacular prose-writing was not so widely taken up or readily emulated as it should have been. But the return to vernacular writing from Sanscrit or Persian; the general change of ground from verse to prose; the widening of subjects and methods; the practising of a perfectly homely and vernacular style, free from obscurity or ornate Sanscrit constructions; and lastly the example of easy plain business-like narration, not altogether devoid of character, all this meant a very great deal. The result achieved may not have been literature in the proper sense but the small amount of

Its formal importance and general movement towards the evolution of an indigenous prose style.

positive achievement should not blind us to its immense formal importance or to the fact that all this indicated a movement towards better and better prose-writing and the gradual evolution of an indigenous prose style. But in the years which followed, during days of political and social instability and general decay of culture consequent upon revolutionary changes of government, the development of Bengali prose met with a great check, and it was not until nearly a century had elapsed, with the establishment of peace and prosperity, business and leisure, congenial to its cultivation, that we have again the serene exercise of elaborate prose. But for this arrested development and its rebirth under entirely different conditions, Bengal prose would have developed along the lines indicated, entirely self-made and home-grown[1].

Its arrested development

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[1]Since writing the above essay on Old Bengali Prose, I have seen the text of *Golak Saṁhitā* of Bṛndāban Dās as published in the *Patrikā* 1309, pp. 55-59. It purports to be a brief treatise on cosmology. The MS. is undated but it has been supposed to be not older than the latter part of the 18th century. The beginning is in prose while the latter part is in verse. Here is an illustrative extract:

সর্ব্বাদৌ মহাশূন্য। তদুপরি অন্ধকার। তদুপরি ধূম্রকার। তদুপরি স্থির পবন। তদুপরি কুর্ম্মরাজ। তদুপরি ঐরাবত। অনন্তের সহস্র ফণা। আর মহাফণা। তার পরে সপ্ত পাতাল। কি কী। অতল ১ বিতল ২ সুতল ৩ তলাতল ৪ রসাতল ৫ মহাতল ৬ পাতাল ৭ এই সপ্তপাতাল। তদুপরি পৃথিবি। পৃথিবি বেষ্টিত সপ্ত সাগর॥ কি কী। লবণ ১ ইক্ষু ২ সুরা ৩ সর্পিস্ ৪ দধি ৫ দুগ্ধ ৬ জলান্তকা ৭। সপ্তদ্বিপ বেষ্টিত সপ্ত সাগর। সপ্ত দ্বিপের নাম কি। জম্বুদ্বিপ পক্ষদীপ কুসদ্বিপ কাঞ্চনদ্বিপ সাকরদ্বিপ পুস্করদ্বিপ অনন্তদ্বিপ ৭।

APPENDIX II

[*Page 109 footnote*]

The Bengali Bible

With respect to the name given to the Serampore Bible, we have the following entry in Fountain's Diary on the 4th January, 1798 (quoted in *Contributions towards a History of Biblical Translations in India*, Calcutta, 1854) :—"This morning the Pundit attended upon us. It was observed that the word *Mangalakhyan* would not properly denominate the whole Bible, as it only signified 'good news,' a term more applicable to the Gospel. It was then proposed to call the Bible *Dharma Shastra* : but the Pundit said *Shastra* only meant that writing which contained commands or orders. We must therefore call it *Dharma pustaka*, *viz.*, the Holy Book." On the 18th March, 1800,[1] the first sheet of Matthew was printed. On the 7th February, 1801, the first edition of the Bengali New Testament was published. It consisted of 2,000 copies ; the expense was £62. In 1800, the translation of the Old Testament was finished. The books of the Old Testament, as printed by the Serampore Press (1801-09) are in 4 volumes, *viz.*, (1) Pentateuch, 1801 ; (2) Joshua-Esther, 1809 ; (3) Job-Song of Solomon, 1804 ; (4) Isaiah-Malachi, 1805. According to the Serampore *Memoirs*, however, the dates of publication are : (1) 1802 ; (2) 1809 ; (3) 1803 ; (4) 1807. The *Memoirs*, however, are not always reliable in this respect. The Psalter appears to have been issued separately in 1803.

[1] The date is incorrectly given as 1803 by Dinesh Ch. Sen (*Hist. of Beng. Lang and Lit.* 1911, p. 852). See Tenth *Memoir*, Appendix.

In 1803, the second edition of the Bengali New Testament was commenced and in 1806, it was ready, 1500 copies. The proof-sheets were examined by every one of the missionaries, and, in addition to this, Carey and Marshman went through it, verse by verse, one reading the Greek, the other the Bengali text. In 1809, the Old Testament was published and in the same year, the whole Bible appeared in five large volumes. It was the work of Carey's own hand (manuscripts may be seen still in the possession of the Serampore Baptist Missionaries); for, Ward, writing some years subsequently, mentions that Carey "wrote with his own pen the whole of the five volumes." In 1809, a third edition of the New Testament went to the Press, consisting of 100 copies and came out in 1811. It was a folio edition. The fourth edition of the New Testament was commenced in 1813 and published in 1817 (5,000 copies) [the date is wrongly given as 1816 in the tenth *Memoir*] ; the sixth edition of the New Testament and third edition of the Old in 1820; 8th edition of the whole Bible in 1832 : the text of this revised edition in double columns is divided into two parts :— 1. Genesis—Esther, p. 204 : 2. Job—Malachi and the New Testament pp. 623. The New Testament has a separate title-page, with date 1832 in Bengali, and 1833 in English figures. Other important subsequent translations of the Bible are:—

(1) The Old Testament translated from the original Hebrew by Dr. W. Yates and the Calcutta Baptist Missionaries with native assistants, pp. 843, Calcutta 1844. The New Testament translated by Dr. Yates, Calcutta 1833, and also an edition printed for the British and Foreign Bible Society in 2 vols. in Roman character, London, 1839. The whole Bible translated out of the original tongues by W. Yates and other Calcutta Baptist

Missionaries with native assistants, pp. 1144, Calcutta 1845.

(2) The above revised by J. Wenger, pp. 1139, Calcutta, 1861. A reprint in smaller size appeared in 1867, edited with slight alterations by C. B. Lewis.

(3) The Holy Bible, in Bengali, with references, translated by the Baptist Missionaries with Bengali assistants. Revised edition by G. H. Rouse. pp. 815, 257. Calcutta 1897.

(4) The New Testament translated by J. F. Ellerton pp. 993, Calcutta 1819.

The different books of the Bible published separately are not mentioned here, the earliest being Matthew (1800), to which were 'annexed some of the most remarkable prophecies in the Old Testament respecting Christ.' The next in chronological order of publication was Pentateuch (1801).

APPENDIX III

(*Page 187 footnote*)

Shost ho Kot, ha K, henkshi yalee ar Danrkaker.

Ek K, henkshi yalee dek hilek ek danrkak b halo ek tookra poneerer apan mook, he lo i ya ek gach her daler oopor bosh, ya roh yach he, tutk hyonat k henksh, yalee bibechona korite lagilo je emon shoo shwadoo grash kemon kori ya hat korite paribo. Kohilek, he pri ye kak aji shokale tomake dek hi ya ami boro shontooshto ho, iya-ch, hi; tomar shoondur monrti ar oojjol palok amar chok, yer jyoti, jodi nomrota krome toomi onoogroho kori, ya amake ektee gan shoona ite, tobe nishshondeho janitam je tomar shwor tomar ar ar gooner shoman bote. Anondonmotto kak e, i onoonoyo kot, hate b hooli ya tahake apan shoorer poripatee dek, ha ibar jonye mook h k, hoolilek tok hon poneer neeche pori, lo, taha tok honi k, henkshi, yalee oot ha, i, ya lo, i, ya jo yo jookta prosht, han korilek, ar danrkakke obshoro krome apon mitt, hya gorimar k, hed korite rak hi, ya gelo.

Ihar p, hol e, i, jek hane aropit ko, t, ha probesh kore shek, hane gnyan gochar lop pa, e.

The system of transliteration adopted by Gilchrist for Bengali was substantially the same as that devised by him for Hindoosthani, Persian, Arabic and Sanscrit. It was on a phonetic basis and it attempted to render by means of English spelling the *sounds* of Bengali, without any reference to the established orthography of the language, even in the case of Sanscrit words. The Roman vowels had

their *English* values. The rival system of Sir William Jones very properly adopted the Italian or Latin values of the Roman vowels, and this system modified by Wilson and Hunter finally won the day. Gilchrist uses *a* for অ, the Sanscrit and Hindusthani sound of অ being regularly represented by *u* ; ই is denoted by i, and ঈ by ee. উ is represented by oo and ঊ by *oo*, and *sh* is used for শ, ষ, স ; *s* being used wherever these letters are so pronounced. The cerebrals are in italics, *t d r* ; the *h* of the aspirate is separated from the stop letter by a bar, as in Sir William Jones's system (*k h*, *ch h*). Gilchrist uses *k* for ক, not c, as is done by Jones, so that with the former খ is *k*| *h*, not *c h*. For অ again he never employs *e* or *a*. His system, whatever may be its faults, has at least the merit of consistency.

APPENDIX IV

(*Page 237 footnote*)

Early Christian Periodicals (Bengali)

The *Samāchar Darpaṇ* and the *Digdarśan* were not properly speaking, missionary papers: for religious controversy was sedulously avoided. The first Christian periodical was the *Gospel Magazine* (8vo. pp. 1-16), English and Bengali, commenced in 1819 by the Missionaries of the London Missionary Society and continued till 1823. Then came the *Evangelist*, edited by Rev. J. Robinson and started in 1843 by the Baptist Association: it was in existence for three years. The *Upadeśaka* was commenced in 1847 and edited by J. Wenger, continued till 1857, when the editor went home; it was recommenced in 1863 after his return and ultimately ceased in 1865. The *Satyārṇaba* edited by the missionaries of the Church of England, was begun in 1849: five volumes appear to have been published. The *Aruṇodaya*, a fortnightly journal, was started in 1856 by the Calcutta Tract Society. The first editor was Rev. Lalbehari De. These are, in their chronological order, all the purely Christian periodicals, published during the first half of the century.

APPENDIX V

Early Christian Tracts

It is impossible, if it is at all worth while, to draw up a complete list of the early Christian tracts in Bengali. A pretty fair list will be found in Murdoch, *Catalogue of Christian Vernacular Literature of India*, Madras, 1870. pp. 4-31. But this is by no means exhaustive. See also Long, *Catalogue* (1855), *Return of Names and Writings* etc. (1855), *Return Relating to Bengali Publications* (1859). Some of these tracts may be found in the Serampore College Library and other missionary centres. See also Blumhardt, *Catalogue of Bengali Printed Books in the British Museum* and *Catalogue of Bengali Books in the India Office*; Wenger, *Catalogue of Bengali Publications* (1865) supplements, Long's *Return Relating to Bengali Publications* (1859) and enumerates only those missionary publications which were printed after 1865.

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